











MACAULAY'S ESSAY ON MILTON.

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# MACAULAY'S MILTON.

EDITED

TO ILLUSTRATE THE LAWS  
OF  
RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION.

BY

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## PREFACE.

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A CERTAIN amount of novelty in the method of editing this essay, calls for explanation.

In presenting a classical treatise to pupils, it is always necessary to combine with the text more or less annotation. Strangely enough, however, we find that, numerous as are the annotated editions of acknowledged classics, they almost invariably turn aside to discuss obscure expressions and archaic words, or conjoin with the narrowest textual criticism a large amount of information clearing up allusions to persons and places of which the reader is supposed to be ignorant. They may even question the accuracy of the facts, and the soundness of the reasoning. Now, all this proceeds on the supposition that the only thing, or at least the chief thing, for which the classic is valuable, is its information. But surely the chief value of a classic is one of style. If so, why does this aspect not receive

more attention from the annotator? Why should he be content to confine himself to a work so unedifying as the mere deriving of old words, and the clearing up of unusual phrases? Might not something be done to display the author's characteristics, to disclose useful qualities for imitation or to point out weak mannerisms that should be avoided?

This has seldom been attempted. The main purpose of editions of Macaulay's Essays, and of the Clarendon Press editions of Shakespeare has been to elucidate the text, to make the pupil understand the author's meaning; while to discriminate the good from the bad, what may be imitated from what should be avoided, is never even hinted at as desirable. Now, if we consider that the Teacher's aim in an English class is first of all to teach his pupils how to use their own language most effectually, we must see that the prevailing system is on a wrong basis.

However, is not the information contained in Macaulay's essays valuable? Probably. But another consideration is of importance. Some books are valuable as information, some as models of style, but it is rare to find a book striking in both aspects. Of Macaulay's essays, most are useful as illustrative of mere form; of none can

we say that the chief merit is the information ; while of only two or three can we affirm that from both points of view they may be utilised as very good school-books. It is in his speeches that Macaulay shows the two qualities in most happy and perfect combination.\*

In regard to the present essay on Milton we must say that neither its information nor its criticism is particularly noteworthy. If we wish to introduce our pupils to a knowledge of Milton's life, political and literary, or to a criticism of his poetry, there are many other books that we should find more exhaustive, more accurate, more interesting, and more intelligible. Moreover, if we wish to show Macaulay at his best, we should certainly not choose this, the most juvenile of his essays. Yet the peculiarity here is, that, along with much that is brilliant and characteristic, we find many occasions where it is just as instructive to show what *not* to do. As much may

\* 'It is impossible to read Macaulay's speeches without feeling that in delivering them he was wielding an instrument of which he was absolutely the master. The luminous order and logical sequence of the parts are only surpassed by the lofty unity and coherence of the whole. High statesmanlike views are unfolded in language that is at once terse, chaste, and familiar, never fine drawn or over-subtle, but plain, direct and forcible, exactly suited to an audience of practical men.'—(*J. Cotter Morison*, p. 131).

be learned from a great author's failures as from his successes ; and it is because Macaulay's style in this essay is so emphatically marked, that we have chosen it, tainted though it is with vicious elements, as the most suitable for instruction from our point of view.

Granting however that it is worth while for pupils to get up the matter or substance of this essay, and granting also that the style as here displayed with all its faults will equally reward study, we must still pronounce that the two things are distinct enquiries and should not conflict. This is in accordance with the first principles of division of labour. We might use the essay on Milton as a Reading Book, and make the reading lesson the occasion for discursive remarks on Derivation, for examples in Parsing and Analysis, for introducing incidents in History, and for exemplifying Sentence and Paragraph Structure. But this would be a curious and distracting mixture. Much better and more profitable to confine ourselves to Reading as mere Reading, to Derivation by itself, to the History apart, and to the Rhetoric apart, at separate sittings. "If the information is of any consequence it needs the attention to be kept well upon itself ; if the language lesson is in earnest it equally wants concentration of mind,



and the rapid shifting to and fro between two totally different studies is adverse to both." (Bain's *Education as a Science*, p. 348.) Let us if we wish, at certain sittings, overtake the historical and literary information contained in the essay, but let us also thereafter at certain other sittings rigorously confine our attention to the form and nothing but the form.

Now, we hold that the business of the English teacher is with the *form* chiefly—that he should not undertake to explain allusions or obscurities, that he should not be enticed away to clear up mythological references except in so far as they have a bearing on the form. To go into all that, is making the book a History Text-Book, and in consistency you ought to call the class the History, and not the English class. The English teacher's business is with the style—with the Sentences and the Paragraphs, the Order of the Words and the Figures of Speech. He must point out Macaulay's mannerisms, his love of Antithesis and of the Balanced Structure, his art in building compact and straightforward paragraphs ; he must show the author at his best and at his worst, and open the eyes of the pupils to the good and the bad in Composition.

Still, as it is too much to expect that this

view will be readily accepted, a concession has been made to the old method of annotating the matter, by appending a series of notes explaining allusions and difficulties in the Text. But of so little intrinsic value is this held to be, that the notes are relegated for easy reference to the foot of the page. They are not considered to be of much importance; many of them merely satisfy a natural curiosity to know something about unknown names; others of them are helpful in understanding Macaulay's meaning, but most of them could be dispensed with in handling the book in its narrowest use as exemplifying a literary style. Another concession has been made in introducing a Memoir of Milton. This of course is useless except as information. All through the essay, Macaulay takes for granted a full knowledge of Milton's Life and Times, so much so, that to one ignorant of the history of that period, a large part of the text presents innumerable difficulties. This is one great reason for regarding the book as altogether unsuitable for information purposes. Instruction in facts should be direct and emphatic, and should not proceed by mere implication. And, if we insist on making such a treatise as this the basis of instruction in facts, we must first lay a proper foundation preliminary and

external to our main theme. A short life of Macaulay is added by way of giving some touch of personality to the author whose literary qualities are the chief topic in the notes.

What then, after the text itself, is considered of most importance to the pupil, is the series of notes at the end of the book. These should be his chief study. They pre-suppose a knowledge of some Text-Book of Rhetoric, such as Bain's *Composition and Rhetoric*; and after so much of the abstract principles of that hand-book have been assimilated they afford a wide compass of concrete examples, and become a kind of Rhetorical Parsing.

To teach Composition two things are necessary.

1. A Text-Book where the abstract principles are laid down with scientific precision and in orderly array.

2. An application of the principles to concrete examples, and an examination of the fitness of the language used. The two things should go hand in hand, and should supplement and support each other. The first condition is being pretty generally fulfilled now-a-days, but any attempts at fulfilling the second have been desultory, and made by each individual teacher for himself. What is still wanted is a number of

editions of our classics annotated from this point of view. The present attempt is put forward in a merely tentative way, and in consequence, the passages selected are not discussed with all the fulness and minuteness that would be called for, after the pupils are more familiarised with the method. Further, it is not considered necessary to overtake the entire treatise. Some passages illustrate much, others very little and it is better to dwell on good and strikingly illustrative instances than to make a point of handling all and sundry with equal detail. Consequently, some pages are passed lightly over as being less profitable material than others more exhaustively treated.

Incidentally, the peculiarities of Macaulay's style receive a fulness of exemplification that entitles the book to the claim of being a critical estimate of the author's literary genius.

In the critical notes, considerable acknowledgment is due to the minute analysis of Macaulay's style, in Professor Minto's *Manual of English Prose Literature*.

ABERDEEN, *June*, 1884.

## MEMOIR OF JOHN MILTON\* (1608-1674).

MILTON was born in 1608, in London. There he spent the first sixteen years of his life, the last sixteen of the reign of James I. In 1625, aged 17, and just after the accession of Charles I., he was admitted at Christ's College, Cambridge, where he studied for seven years, with industrious and persevering success.

On leaving the University, Milton went to reside in Buckinghamshire, at a small village not far from Windsor, called Horton, where his father, a London scrivener, who had by this time retired from business, had taken a country house. The disturbed state of politics—King Charles having quarrelled with three Parliaments, and now resolving to govern by his own authority—led Milton to give up his original intention of entering the church, and he resolved to devote himself thenceforward exclusively to study, speculation, and literature. Six years of this life he saw here, producing at intervals the five poems belonging to his first period—*L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, *Arcades*, *Comus*, and *Lycidas*.

The quiet time at Horton brings him to his thirtieth year, and meanwhile Charles was busy with his new views on Government. By the help of his chief advisers, Laud and

\* As Macaulay takes a knowledge of Milton's life and times for granted in his essay, it is perhaps advisable to present to the pupil a brief but general survey of the history of the poet's time, especially in so far as the facts are referred to in the text. The narrative is an abstract of the lengthy Memoir of Milton prefixed by Professor Masson to his edition of *Milton's Poems*.

Strafford, the King had inaugurated his *Reign of Thorough*, had repressed and persecuted Calvinistic Theology, and all Puritan opinions, and had systematically promoted a high Prelacy and a ritualistic ceremonial of worship, which in the eyes of the Puritans brought the Church of England back into the shadow of the Church of Rome. The large mass of the population lay in a dumb agony of discontent, sighing for a Parliament but not daring to mutter the word. With these Milton was in sympathy. And having his mind full of those subjects, he, in 1638, set out for Italy on a journey which extended over sixteen months. It was then that he wrote his Epistle to Manso (see p. 15).

When he returned to England he found politics still worse. Charles, in forcing Episcopacy on Scotland, found the Scottish people not only stubbornly arrayed against him with their famous Covenant, but firmly resolved to abide by the old Presbyterian system of Knox. The King was bent on coercing them, and civil war had almost begun.

Milton did not stay long at Horton, but in 1640 removed to London, took a house there, and gave himself up to the educating of his two nephews, John and Edward Philips, the sons of his elder sister. Meantime troubles grew thick and fast in public affairs — Charles losing hold of his people, in open conflict with the Scots, and paving the way for his own destruction. All thoughts of poetry were driven out of Milton's mind by the dismal outlook; he was whirled into politics, and for twenty years (1640-1660), he figured as a prose writer. It was on the Church question that he first spoke out. The Long Parliament had executed Strafford, had imprisoned Laud, and had subjected Charles to constitutional checks. The only question for the time was as to the Church. All were agreed that Episcopacy as Laud wished it was not to be thought of. Some, however, advocated a limited Episcopacy, while others insisted on a Presbyterian re-construction. These last



were the Root and Branch Reformers, and it was in favour of their views that Milton launched his first pamphlet '*Of Reformation*, followed shortly afterwards by others (*Animadversions on the Remonstrant*, p. 89), which may be called his Anti-Episcopal Pamphlets.

In 1642, began the great Civil War. From that date Englishmen were divided into two opposed masses—the *Parliamentarians*, taking the side of the majority of the House of Commons, and the small minority of the House of Lords, which still sat on as the two Houses; and the *Royalists*, taking the side of the King and of the bulk of the nobility, with the minority of the Commons. Milton, of course, was a resolute Parliamentarian. Although he did not serve in the Parliamentary Army, he watched its progress with the keenest interest and sympathy.

In 1643, the Poet married Mary Powell, whose family, strange as it may seem, were Royalists. The lady was very young, and not taking readily to Milton's philosophical life, soon went home to her friends, and her husband could not induce her to return. Her conduct set Milton writing on the subject of divorce, and it was then that he enunciated the opinion that obstinate incompatibility of mind and temper between husband and wife is sufficient ground for their separation and marrying again. Two years later his wife returned to him, but this marriage was the greatest blunder of his life, and the cause of much unhappiness.

Shortly after Milton's marriage, the Parliamentary party began to dispute among themselves on a subject which not only interfered with the prosecution of the war, but was of great consequence in the future history. This was the dispute between the Presbyterians and the Independents. Whether was the form of Church Government in England to be of the Scottish pattern with a gradation of Church Courts, from congregation and presbytery to the representative assembly or on the con-

gregational system, with every congregation independent within itself? A further question was:—Must every one conform to the new Establishment, or is dissent to be tolerated? The majority of the English divines were in favour of strict Presbyterianism, but a considerable minority, finally swelled by the Baptists and a great many other sects that had lurked in English society since Elizabeth's time, held by the principle of liberty of conscience, and considered compulsory Presbyterianism as monstrous as Papacy. Strangely enough, Independency had come to prevail largely in the Parliamentary Army, and Cromwell was regarded as its head. Out of this antagonism grew various results. The Presbyterians viewed with suspicion the success of Cromwell and his army-Independents, and fearing ruin to England from the principle of toleration, if the King were won over to that side, they contented themselves with scheming to bring the King to terms with themselves rather than to beat him thoroughly. Cromwell, on the other hand, and the Independents, were resolute to defeat the King at all hazards. Indeed before 1644 was ended, it was clear that the Independents were the more thorough-going revolutionists of the two, and they gradually became the stronger party. The army was re-modelled, and under the new generals a more vigorous policy was pursued in the field, until, in 1645, Naseby virtually finished the war by the utter rout of the King.

In 1644, Milton published his "*Areopagitica, or Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing*," addressed to the Parliament, and urging them to repeal an ordinance passed in 1643, for the regulation of the Press by a staff of official censors. In this pamphlet, it was evident that Milton was in complete political sympathy with the Independents. Moreover, his writings on Divorce had driven him into open war with the Presbyterians.

After Naseby, Charles gave himself up to the Scots—auxiliaries of the Parliamentary Army, but, of course, Presbyterian in opinion—and this complicated the struggle. The

Presbyterians wished to treat with him for a strict and universal Presbytery in England without toleration ; and this being quite opposed to Independent opinion, made the Independents furious against the King. Finally, the Scots handed him over to Cromwell's army, and the quarrel between the two parties became hotter than ever. The war was over, and the Presbyterians clamoured for disbanding the army. But it refused to be disbanded, and so violent grew the dispute, that at last the army disowned Parliamentary authority, marched to London, and was master of the situation. Cromwell and the other chiefs tried negotiations with the King, but these were futile. He escaped to the Isle of Wight, and made a Secret Treaty with the Scots that he would confirm Presbyterian Government in England, and suppress the Independents. The Scots invaded England to restore Charles to his rights, and in 1648 the Second Civil War began.

But Cromwell was equal to the occasion. He defeated the Scots at Preston. The Parliamentary army brought Charles back from the Isle of Wight, purged the Parliament of antagonistic members, and compelled the Parliament so purged to set up a High Court of Justice for trying the King. Charles' doom was sealed, and though many of even the Independents shrank from the deed, he was executed, Jan. 30, 1649. England then became a Republic—governed by the Rump of the Long Parliament, *i.e.*, the remnant of the House of Commons that the army had left in existence—in conjunction with a Council of State, or Ministry of forty-five members of the Rump.

To this Republic Milton gave a speedy adhesion, by publishing a thorough-going Republican pamphlet, defending the recent proceedings of the English Army, and containing a severe invective against Charles. The consequence was that there was at once offered to him the post of *Secretary for Foreign Tongues*, or *Latin Secretary* to the Council. He accepted the post, and for several years had a good deal to do in drafting Latin

letters to Foreign Governments, as well as in conducting other official and diplomatic business. Further, as he was known by the Council to be a fitting literary champion of the still-struggling Commonwealth, he was often requested by them to come forward in this capacity, and accordingly produced his *Iconoclastes*, and his *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano*. The first (*The Image-Breaker*), was an answer to the *Eikon Basilike* (Royal Image), a book professing to be meditations and prayers written by Charles I. in his last years. The *King's Book*, though now known to be a fabrication in his interest, was then all but universally believed in, and had a wide circulation, so that Milton's answer, which mercilessly criticised both the book and the dead King, was a signal service to the Government. The other, the *Defensio* (Defence of the people of England) was even of greater moment. It was published in 1651, in reply to the *Defensio Regis*, or Defence of Charles I., an attack on the English Commonwealth, which had been published in Holland the year before by the Leyden Professor—Salmasius, at the instance of Charles II. Never in the world had one human being inflicted on another a more ruthless or appalling castigation, and Milton suddenly became famous.

Meanwhile Cromwell, a member of the Council from the first, had been Lord-Lieutenant in Ireland, had conquered the Scots at Dunbar (1650), and finally crushed out rebellion in the great battle of Worcester (1651), and was back in London again, hailed as the saviour of the Commonwealth and the supreme chief of England. The young King was again in exile, and the Commonwealth was to all appearance stable and powerful.

In 1652, a great disaster fell on Milton—he became totally blind. The blindness, which had been gradually coming on for some years, was accelerated by his persisting to write his answer to Salmasius, in spite of the warnings of his physicians. Henceforth, though still normally in full rank as Foreign Secretary, he had to be greatly assisted in his work (see p. 89). To increase

his troubles, in 1654, his wife died, leaving him with three daughters; and though he married again in 1656, this second wife died in little more than a year. So that in 1658 we find him at the age of fifty a widower with three uncared-for daughters, the eldest not twelve years old. The sequel was tragic, both for him and for them.

In 1653, the Commonwealth as originally constituted was superseded, and Cromwell became, first Dictator and then Protector—a position which he held till his death in 1658. The cause for this change was as follows. The Rump had been a mere make-shift for a Parliament, and Cromwell and the all-powerful army at his back made up their minds that the time was ripe for a more regular government. But there were misunderstandings, and nothing could be done till Cromwell entered the House with a body of musketeers and forcibly dislodged the fifty-two obstreperous members—all that were left of the original Long Parliament. He also dissolved the Council of State. Then, after ruling by the aid of a council of his officers for some nine months as a kind of Dictator, he assumed a Protectorate, and became “Lord Protector” (p. 67).

Now, however, although all England, Scotland, and Ireland were obliged to acquiesce in his supremacy, yet the Oliverians, as his more thorough-going adherents were called, were but a section of the original Army-men and Republicans. To many, “the Protector” was but a king with a new name, and they condemned the change as opposed to true Republicanism. Milton, however, was on the whole an Oliverian, and regarded the Protectorate as the most effective embodiment for the time of Republican principles. He was consequently continued in his Latin Secretaryship, and lost no opportunity of striking a blow by pamphlets or otherwise, in behalf of his favourite opinions. But in 1658, Cromwell died, and under Richard, his son and successor, Republicanism was at a discount. Notwithstanding

Milton's best efforts to uphold "the good old cause," monarchical principles triumphed, so that after the period of anarchy described by Macaulay at page 70, there came, in 1660, the Restoration.

The tables were turned. Milton had fought for a dying cause, and the wonder is, that when all the leading Regicides suffered death, he, too, was not hanged. For some time he was in real danger, but the new Government contented themselves with burning his books, and left him free to resume his poetical labours—interrupted for twenty years by the stress of politics.

His remaining days were spent for the most part on *Paradise Lost*—begun in 1658. Visited by a few Nonconformist friends, and assisted by his nephews, or the Quaker Ellwood, he gradually elaborated his work notwithstanding his adverse circumstances—

"On evil days now fallen and evil tongues,  
In darkness and with dangers compassed round,  
And solitude."

His home was not a happy one. His three girls had grown up ill-looking after, and but slenderly educated. The eldest, who was lame and deformed, could not write; and the other two could write but indifferently, so that Milton can hardly have employed them as amanuenses. He, however, exacted from them service which they found irksome. He made them read to him in six or seven languages, though they themselves did not understand a word. This drove them into rebellion: they deserted him, cheated him, and despised him, till Milton once more took refuge in marriage. His third wife proved a very excellent and careful one.

*Paradise Lost* was finished in 1665, and published in 1667. Then, in 1671, appeared both *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*. Milton died of 'gout struck in,' on November 8, 1674.



## LIFE OF MACAULAY.

**T**HOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY, whose father was Zachary Macaulay—famous for his advocacy of the abolition of slavery, was born at Rothley Temple, in Leicestershire, towards the end of 1800. From his infancy he showed a precocity that was simply extraordinary. He not only acquired knowledge rapidly, but he possessed a marvellous power of working it up into literary form, and his facile pen produced compositions in prose and in verse, histories, odes, and hymns. From the time that he was three years old he read incessantly, for the most part lying on the rug before the fire with his book on the ground, and a piece of bread and butter in his hand. It is told of him that when a boy of four, and on a visit with his father he was unfortunate enough to have a cup of hot coffee overturned on his legs, and when his hostess in her sympathetic kindness, asked shortly after how he was feeling, he looked up in her face and said, 'Thank you, madam, the agony is abated'. At seven he wrote a compendium of Universal History. At eight, he was so fired with the *Lay* and with *Marmion*, that he wrote three cantos of a poem in imitation of Scott's manner, and called it the 'Battle of Cheviot'. And he had many other literary projects, in all of which he showed perfect correctness both in grammar and in spelling, made his meaning uniformly clear, and was scrupulously accurate in his punctuation.

With all this cleverness he was not conceited. His parents, and particularly his mother, were most judicious in their treatment. They never encouraged him to display his powers of conversation, and they abstained from every kind of remark that might

help him to think himself different from other boys. One result was that throughout his life he was free from literary vanity ; another was that he habitually over-estimated the knowledge of others. When he said in his essays that every schoolboy knew this and that fact in history, he was judging their information by his own vast intellectual stores.

At the age of twelve, Macaulay was sent to a private school in the neighbourhood of Cambridge. There he laid the foundation of his future scholarship, and though fully occupied with his school work—chiefly Latin, Greek, and Mathematics—he found time to gratify his insatiable thirst for general literature. He read at random and without restraint, but with an apparent partiality for the lighter and more attractive books. Poetry and prose fiction remained throughout his life his favourite reading. On subjects of this nature, he displayed a most unerring memory, as well as the capacity for taking in at a glance the contents of a printed page. Whatever caught his fancy he remembered, as well as though he had consciously got it by heart. He once said, that if all the copies of *Paradise Lost* and the *Pilgrim's Progress* were to be destroyed, he would from memory alone undertake to reproduce both.

In 1818, Macaulay went from school to the University—to Trinity College, Cambridge. But here the studies were not to his mind. He had no liking for Mathematics, and was nowhere as a mathematical student. His inclination was wholly for literature, and he gained various high distinctions in that department. It was unfortunate for him that he had no severe discipline in scientific method ; to his disproportionate partiality for the lighter sides of literature must be attributed his want of philosophic grasp, his dislike to arduous speculations, and his want of courage in facing intellectual problems. (J. Cotter Morison, p. 9.)

The private life of Cambridge had a much greater influence on him, than the recognised studies of the place. He made

many friends. His social qualities, and his conversational powers were widely exercised and largely developed. He became too a brilliant member of the Union Debating Society, and here Politics claimed his attention. Altogether he gave himself more to the enjoyment of all that was stirring around him, than to the taking of University Honours. In 1824, however, he was elected a Fellow, and began to take pupils. Further, he sought a wider field for his literary labours, and contributed papers to some of the magazines—mostly to *Knight's Quarterly Magazine*. Chief among these contributions are "Ivry," and "Naseby" in spirited verse, and the conversation between Cowley and Milton, in as splendid prose.

When Macaulay went to Cambridge, his father seemed in affluent circumstances, but the slave trade agitation engrossed his time and his energy, and by and by there came on the family commercial ruin. This was a blow to the eldest son, but he bore up bravely, brought sunshine and happiness into the depressed household, and proceeded to retrieve their position with stern fortitude. He ultimately paid off his father's debts.

Though called to the bar in 1826, he did not take kindly to the Law, and soon renounced it for an employment more congenial—Literature. Already in 1824, he had been invited to write for the *Edinburgh Review*, and in August, 1825, appeared in that magazine his article on Milton, which created a sensation, and made the critics aware of the advent of a new literary power. This first success he followed up rapidly, and besides giving new life to the periodical, he soon gained for himself a name of note. In 1828, he was made a Commissioner of Bankruptcy, and in 1830 was elected M.P. for Calne. In the Reformed Parliament he sat for Leeds.

He entered Parliament at an opportune period, and was in the thick of the great Reform conflict. His speeches on the Reform Bill raised him to the first rank as an orator, and gained

for him official posts. It was while burdened with these severe public labours, that he wrote thirteen (from Montgomery to Pitt) of the *Edinburgh Review* Essays. Thus he went on for four years, but the narrow circumstances of his family induced him to accept the lucrative post of legal adviser to the Supreme Council of India. This necessitated his going to India, which was clearly adverse to his prospects at home; yet the certainty of returning with £20,000 saved from his large salary was sufficient inducement to make the sacrifice, and he sailed Feb. 15, 1834.

In India he maintained his reputation as a hard worker. Besides his official duties as a Member of Council, he undertook the additional burden of acting as Chairman in two important Committees, and it is in connection with one of these—the Committee appointed to draw up the new codes, that he has his chief title to fame as an Indian statesman. The New Penal Code was in great part his work, and proves his wide acquaintance with English Criminal Law. He also took great part in the work of the Committee of Public Instruction, and was chiefly instrumental in introducing English studies among the native population. But he was not popular in Calcutta. Certain changes he helped to introduce roused the feeling of the English residents against him, and he was attacked in the most scurrilous way.

In 1838, he was back in England. Meanwhile he had written two more essays for the *Edinburgh*, one on Mackintosh, and one on Bacon, and he was hardly home when there appeared another, that on Sir W. Temple. After spending the winter in Italy, he reviewed in 1839 Mr. Gladstone's book on *Church and State*, and might have settled down to purely literary life, but once more he was drawn into politics. Elected as Member for Edinburgh, he was soon admitted into the Cabinet as Secretary-at-War to the Whig Ministry of Lord Melbourne. The position, however, was no gain to Macaulay. He purposed to write

“*A History of England*, from the accession of King James II., down to a time which is within the memory of men still living,” and his official duties forced him to lay this project aside for the present.

Fortunately Lord Melbourne’s ministry did not last long ; it fell in 1841, and Macaulay was released from office. Still retaining his seat for Edinburgh, and speaking occasionally in the House, he was free to follow his natural bent.

His leisure hours were given as usual to essay-work for the *Edinburgh*, and he wrote in succession, Clive, Hastings, Frederick the Great, Addison, Chatham, &c. But in 1844, his connection with the *Review* came to an end, and he wrote no more for the Blue and Yellow, as it was called. In 1841, he had put forth a volume of poems—the Lays of Ancient Rome—not without misgivings as to the result. But the fresh and vigorous language at once carried the volume into popularity, and it had an enormous sale.

On a change of Government in 1846, Macaulay, at the request of Lord John Russel again became a Cabinet Minister, this time as Paymaster-General of the Army, and having to seek re-election from his constituents, went down to Scotland for the purpose. After a severe contest, and notwithstanding a growing unpopularity, he was successful. But at the general election of the following year, the forces in opposition to him redoubled their energy, and he was defeated.

This was the real end of his political life. Although pressed to contest other seats, he resolutely declined, and for the next few years worked ‘doggedly’ at his *History*. In 1848, appeared the first two volumes, which had an immense success, 13,000 copies being sold in less than four months. The same year he was elected Lord Rector of Glasgow University. By 1852, the people of Edinburgh had repented the rejection of their famous Member, and took steps to re-elect him free of expense, and so thoroughly was the scheme carried out, that Macaulay, without

having made a single speech, and without having visited the city, was returned triumphantly at the top of the poll. Through the length and breadth of the land the news was hailed with satisfaction, as an act of justice for an undeserved slight in the past. The result was very flattering to Macaulay, but he never really returned to political life as in his younger days. Moreover, forty years of incessant intellectual labours had begun to undermine his health, and he was now unequal to the fatigues that formerly were a pleasure to him. Accordingly in 1856, after having brought out the third and fourth volumes of his history, of which in a few months 25,000 copies were sold, he resigned his seat, and yielding too late obedience to all interested in his welfare, gave himself up to the enjoyment of that ease which he had faithfully earned. Then in 1857, he was created a Peer—Baron Macaulay of Rothley, his birthplace. Still struggling on with his *History* in the intermissions of his malady, he died suddenly on Dec. 28, 1859. He was only 59—the victim of an appetite for work, insatiable and unfortunately too long ungoverned.



*Joannis Miltoni, Angli, de Doctrina Christiana libri duo posthumi. A Treatise on Christian Doctrine,* compiled from the Holy Scriptures alone. By JOHN MILTON; translated from the original by Charles R. Sumner, M.A., &c., &c. 1825.

TOWARDS the close of the year 1823, Mr. Lemon, Deputy-keeper of the State Papers, in the course of his researches among the presses of his office, met with a large Latin manuscript. With it were found corrected copies of the foreign despatches written by 5 Milton, while he filled the office of Secretary,\* and several papers relating to the Popish Trials and the Rye-house Plot.† The whole was wrapped up in an envelope, superscribed 'To Mr. Skinner, Merchant'. On examination, the large manuscript proved to be 10 the long lost Essay on the Doctrines of Christianity, which, according to Wood and Toland, Milton finished

\* After the execution of Charles I. in 1649, Milton was appointed Secretary to the Council of State. This office corresponds to our Foreign Secretary. The official language in those days was Latin.

† A Whig plot to assassinate Charles II., on his return from New Market. It was discovered, and several persons, notably Lord William Russell and Algernon Sidney, suffered death.

after the Restoration, and deposited with Cyriac Skinner. Skinner, it is well known, held the same political opinions with his illustrious friend. It is therefore probable, as Mr. Lemon conjectures, that he  
 5 may have fallen under the suspicions of the government during that persecution of the Whigs which followed the dissolution of the Oxford Parliament, and that, in consequence of a general seizure of his papers, this work may have been brought to the office in which  
 10 it has been found. But whatever the adventures of the manuscript may have been, no doubt can exist that it is a genuine relic of the great poet.

Mr. Sumner, who was commanded by His Majesty  
 to edit and translate the treatise, has acquitted himself  
 15 of his task in a manner honourable to his talents and to his character. His version is not indeed very easy or elegant; but it is entitled to the praise of clearness and fidelity. His notes abound with interesting quotations, and have the rare merit of really elucidating  
 20 the text. The preface is evidently the work of a sensible and candid man, firm in his own religious opinions, and tolerant towards those of others.

The book itself will not add much to the fame of Milton. It is, like all his Latin works, well written—  
 25 though not exactly in the style of the prize essays of Oxford and Cambridge. There is no elaborate imitation of classical antiquity, no scrupulous purity, none of the ceremonial cleanness which characterises the diction of our academical Pharisees. The author does

not attempt to polish and brighten his composition into the Ciceronian \* gloss and brilliancy. He does not, in short, sacrifice sense and spirit to pedantic refinements. (The nature of his subject<sup>the words</sup> compelled him to use many words

5

‘That would have made Quintilian † stare and gasp’.

But he writes with as much ease and freedom as if Latin were his mother tongue ; and where he is least happy, his failure seems to arise from the carelessness of a native, not from the ignorance of a foreigner. 10 What Denham, ‡ with great felicity, says of Cowley, § may be applied to him. He wears the garb<sup>he wears</sup> but not the clothes of the ancients.

Throughout the volume are discernible the traces of a powerful and independent mind, emancipated from 15 the influence of authority, and devoted to the search of truth. He professes to form his system from the Bible alone ; and his digest of scriptural texts is certainly among the best that have appeared. But he is not always so happy in his inferences as in his 20 citations.

\* *Cicero* (106-43, B.C.) the greatest orator of Rome, whose works show the Latin Language in its greatest perfection.

† *Quintilian* (40-118, A.D.) a famous Roman teacher of Rhetoric, and author of an exhaustive treatise on that subject. The line is from one of Milton’s sonnets.

‡ *Denham*, Sir John (1615-1668), a poet contemporary with Milton. His chief work is *Cooper’s Hill*, a contemplative poem on the view over the Thames, from a hill near Windsor Castle.

§ *Cowley*, Abraham (1618-1667), also a poet of the same time, more famous perhaps as a writer of Prose Essays. His poetry is fantastical and extravagant.

Some of the heterodox \* opinions which he avows seem to have excited considerable amazement ; particularly his Arianism,† and his notions on the subject of polygamy.‡ Yet we can scarcely conceive that any  
 5 person could have read the *Paradise Lost* without suspecting him of the former ; nor do we think that any reader, acquainted with the history of his life, ought to be much startled at the latter. The opinions which he has expressed respecting the nature of the Deity,  
 10 the eternity of matter, and the observation of the Sabbath, might, we think, have caused more just surprise.

But we will not go into the discussion of these points. The book, were it far more orthodox, or far more  
 15 heretical than it is, would not much edify or corrupt the present generation. The men of our time are not  
 20 to be converted or perverted by quartos.§ A few more days, and this essay will follow the *Defensio Populi* || to the dust and silence of the upper shelf. The name of its author, and the remarkable circumstances at-

\* *Heterodox*—deviating from established opinion, opposed to 'orthodox'

† *Arianism*. The doctrines of the followers of Arius (4th Cent., A.D.). Their heterodox opinions related to the subject of the Incarnation.

‡ *Polygamy*. Milton had peculiar views on the subject of divorce, prompted in him by the conduct of his first wife (See *Memoir of Milton*, p. xvii).

§ *Quartos*. Books in which every sheet being twice folded, makes four leaves, generally written 4to. So octavo, 8vo, where every sheet is folded into eight leaves. Duodecimo, 12mo, into twelve.

|| *Defensio Populi*. A Defence of the People of England—a work by Milton in Latin, written to justify the English people in executing Charles I.

tending its publication, will secure to it a certain degree of attention. For a month or two it will occupy a few minutes of chat in every drawing-room, and a few columns in every Magazine; and it will then, to borrow the elegant language of the play-bills, be withdrawn, to make room for the forthcoming novelties.

We wish, however, to avail ourselves of the interest, transient as it may be, which this work has excited. The dexterous Capuchins\* never choose to preach on the life and miracles of a saint, till they have awakened the devotional feelings of their auditors, by exhibiting some relic of him—a thread of his garment, a lock of his hair, or a drop of his blood. On the same principle, we intend to take advantage of the late interesting discovery, and, while this memorial of a great and good man is still in the hands of all, to say something of his moral and intellectual qualities. Nor, we are convinced, will the severest of our readers blame us if, on an occasion like the present, we turn for a short time from the topics of the day, to commemorate, in all love and reverence, the genius and virtues of John Milton, the poet, the statesman, the philosopher, the glory of English literature, the champion and the martyr of English liberty.

It is by his poetry that Milton is best known; and it is of his poetry that we wish first to speak. By the

\* *Capuchins*, a nickname given to a branch of the Franciscan order of monks, from the *Capuce* or pointed cowl which they wore in imitation of St. Francis.

general suffrage of the civilised world, his place has been assigned among the greatest masters of the art. His detractors, however, though outvoted, have not been silenced. There are many critics, and some of  
 5 great name, who contrive in the same breath to extol the poems and to decry the poet. The works, they acknowledge, considered in themselves, may be classed among the noblest productions of the human mind. But they will not allow the author to rank with those  
 10 great men who, born in the infancy of civilisation, supplied, by their own powers, the want of instruction, and, though destitute of models themselves, bequeathed to posterity models which defy imitation. Milton, it is said, inherited what his predecessors created; he  
 15 lived in an enlightened age; he received a finished education; and we must therefore, if we would form a just estimate of his powers, make large deductions for these advantages.

We venture to say, on the contrary, paradoxical as  
 20 the remark may appear, that no poet has ever had to struggle with more unfavourable circumstances than Milton. He doubted, as he has himself owned, whether he had not been born 'an age too late'. For this notion Johnson\* has thought fit to make him the

\* *Johnson*, Dr. Samuel (1709-1784)—one of the most famous literary men of the Eighteenth Century. He wrote the first English Dictionary; edited a periodical called the 'Rambler,' &c. The work in which he ridiculed Milton, is his 'Lives of the Poets,' a book containing as much criticism as biography, and dealing with all the English poets from Cowley to Gray, chief amongst whom are Milton, Pope, Dryden, Addison, and Swift. Johnson was unjust to Milton's poetry.

*from progress &c.*  
*relation between science & art*  
*conscious to allegorise*  
*philosophical and poetic*  
Proof by analogy 7

butt of his clumsy ridicule. The poet, we believe, understood the nature of his art better than the critic. He knew that his poetical genius derived no advantage from the civilisation which surrounded him, or from the learning which he had acquired; and he 5 looked back with something like regret to the ruder age of simple words and vivid impressions.

We think that, as civilisation advances, poetry almost necessarily declines. Therefore, though we admire those great works of imagination which have 10 appeared in dark ages, we do not admire them the more because they have appeared in dark ages. On the contrary, we hold that the most wonderful and splendid proof of genius is a great poem produced in a civilised age. We cannot understand why those 15 who believe in that most orthodox article of literary faith, that the earliest poets are generally the best, should wonder at the rule as if it were the exception. Surely the uniformity of the phenomenon indicates a corresponding uniformity in the cause.

The fact is, that common observers reason from the progress of the experimental sciences to that of the imitative arts. The improvement of the former is 20 gradual and slow. Ages are spent in collecting materials, ages more in separating and combining them. Even when a system has been formed, there is still something to add, to alter, or to reject. Every generation enjoys the use of a vast hoard bequeathed to it by antiquity, and transmits it, augmented by

fresh acquisitions, to future ages. In these pursuits, therefore, the first speculators lie under great disadvantages, and, even when they fail, are entitled to praise. Their pupils, with far inferior intellectual powers, speedily surpass them in actual attainments. Every girl who has read Mrs. Marcet's *Little Dialogues on Political Economy*,\* could teach Montague† or Walpole‡ many lessons in finance. Any intelligent man may now, by resolutely applying himself for a few years to mathematics, learn more than the great Newton§ knew after half a century of study and meditation.

But it is not thus with <sup>art - with</sup> music, with painting, or with sculpture. Still less is it thus with poetry. The progress of refinement rarely supplies these arts with better objects of imitation. It may indeed improve the instruments which are necessary to the mechanical operations of the musician, the sculptor, and the painter. But language, the machine of the poet, is

\* *Mrs. Marcet* (1769-1858), a writer on educational topics. Besides her conversations on Political Economy, she wrote others on Chemistry, Natural Philosophy, &c. *Political Economy* is the science of the laws that regulate the distribution of wealth.

† *Montague*, Charles, Earl of Halifax (1667-1715), was Chancellor of the Exchequer in William III.'s reign. He distinguished himself as a financier by establishing the Bank of England.

‡ *Walpole*, Sir Robert (1676-1745), also a Chancellor of the Exchequer, under George I. and George II. His financial ability was displayed in connection with the South Sea Scheme.

§ *Newton*, Sir Isaac (1642-1727), famous as Mathematician and Natural Philosopher. He discovered the law of universal gravitation, extended the Higher Mathematics, and made original investigations into the nature of light.



best fitted for his purpose in its rudest state. Nations, like individuals, first perceive, and then abstract. They advance from particular images to general terms. Hence the vocabulary of an enlightened society is philosophical, that of a half-civilised people is poetical. 5

[This change in the language of men is partly the cause and partly the effect of a corresponding change in the nature of their intellectual operations, a change by which science gains and poetry loses.] Generalisation is necessary to the advancement of knowledge, but 10 particularity is indispensable to the creations of the imagination. In proportion as men know more and think more, they look less at individuals and more at classes. They therefore make better theories and worse poems. They give us vague phrases instead of images, and 15 personified qualities instead of men. They may be better able to analyse human nature than their predecessors. But analysis is not the business of the poet. His office is to portray not to dissect. He may believe in a moral sense, like Shaftesbury.\* He 20 may refer all human actions to self-interest like Helvetius,† or he may never think about the matter at all. His creed on such subjects will no more influence his poetry, properly so called, than the notions which a

\* Shaftesbury, Earl of (1671-1713), an English Philosopher, the friend of the poet Pope, and author of several philosophical treatises named 'Characteristics'. He assumed a certain internal sense (the Moral Sense) as perceiving both the beautiful and the good.

† Helvetius (1715-1771), a French philosopher, one of whose leading tenets was that all human conduct is grounded in self-interest.

*Connections may be omitted*

*1. The sense which relates to the beautiful and the good is a moral sense.*

*2. The sense which relates to the useful and the profitable is a moral sense.*

painter may have conceived respecting the lachrymal glands,\* or the circulation of the blood, will affect the tears of his Niobe,† or the blushes of his Aurora.§ If Shakespeare had written a book on the motives of 5 human actions, it is by no means certain that it would have been a good one. It is extremely improbable that it would have contained half so much able reasoning on the subject as is to be found in the fable of *The Bees*. But could Mandeville§ have created 10 an Iago?|| Well as he knew how to resolve characters into their elements, would he have been able to combine those elements in such a manner as to make up a man—a real, living, individual man?

Perhaps no person can be a poet, or can even enjoy 15 poetry, without a certain unsoundness of mind, if anything which gives so much pleasure ought to be called unsoundness. By poetry we mean, not, of course, all writing in verse, nor even all good writing

\* *Lachrymal Glands*, the vessels of the eye that secrete the tears.

† *Niobe*, a character in Greek mythology. She had twelve children, and taunted Latona because she had only two, Apollo and Diana. Latona in revenge caused all Niobe's children to be destroyed. Niobe was inconsolable, wept herself to death and was changed into stone. The name came to be a personification of female sorrow, and the legend was a favourite subject in ancient sculpture.

‡ *Aurora*, the goddess of early morning, called by Homer 'rosy-fingered'. According to the Greek myth, she set out before the sun, and was the pioneer of his rising.

§ *Mandeville*, Bernard de (1670-1733), a writer on social subjects, and author of 'the Fable of the Bees,' a satire enforcing the dictum that civilisation is based on the vices of society.

|| *Iago*, a leading character in Shakespeare's 'Othello'—and the type of an artful villain of the blackest dye.

1. Formal
2. Contrast - heat as strong as cold
3. Examples: lightning from clouds
4. Addressed by Shakespeare in 'Midsummer Night's Dream'

11

in verse. Our definition excludes many metrical compositions which, on other grounds, deserve the highest praise. By poetry we mean, the art of employing words in such a manner as to produce an illusion on the imagination, the art of doing by 5 means of words what the painter does by means of colours. Thus the greatest of poets\* has described it, in lines universally admired for the vigour and felicity of their diction, and still more valuable on account of the just notion which they convey of the art in which 10 he excelled:—

‘As imagination bodies forth

The forms of things unknown, the poet’s pen

Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing

A local habitation and a name.’

—*Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Act. V., sc. I.

15

These are the fruits of the ‘fine frenzy’ which he ascribes to the poet—a fine frenzy, doubtless, but still a frenzy. Truth, indeed, is essential to poetry; but it is the truth of madness. The reasonings are 20 just; but the premises are false. After the first suppositions have been made, everything ought to be consistent; but those first suppositions require a degree of credulity which almost amounts to a partial and temporary derangement of the intellect. Hence, 25 of all people, children are the most imaginative. They abandon themselves without reserve to every illusion. Every image which is strongly presented to

\* *The greatest of poets*, Shakespeare, in ‘*Midsummer Night’s Dream*’.

their mental eye produces on them the effect of reality. No man, whatever his sensibility may be, is ever affected by Hamlet or Lear,\* as a little girl is affected by the story of poor Red Riding-hood. 5 She knows that it is all false, that wolves cannot speak, that there are no wolves in England. Yet, in spite of her knowledge, she believes; she weeps, she trembles; she dares not go into a dark room lest she should feel the teeth of the monster at her throat. 10 Such is the despotism of the imagination over uncultivated minds.

In a rude state of society, men are children with a greater variety of ideas. It is therefore in such a 15 state of society that we may expect to find the poetical temperament in its highest perfection. In an enlightened age there will be much intelligence, much science, much philosophy, abundance of just classification and subtle analysis, abundance of wit and eloquence, abundance of verses, and even of good 20 ones—but little poetry. Men will judge and compare; but they will not create. They will talk about the old poets, and comment on them, and to a certain degree enjoy them. But they will scarcely be able to conceive the effect which poetry produced on their 25 ruder ancestors, the agony, the ecstasy, the plenitude of belief. The Greek rhapsodists,† according to

\* *Hamlet and Lear*, two of Shakespeare's great tragedies.

† *Greek Rhapsodists*, were Bards who collected pieces of the 'Iliad' and the 'Odyssey,' enough to make a "ballad," and sang them as our own minstrels sang the deeds of famous heroes. (Greek *rhapto* to string together, and *oîē* a song).

Plato,\* could not recite Homer† without almost falling into convulsions. The Mohawk‡ hardly feels the scalping-knife while he shouts his death-song. The power which the ancient bards of Wales and Germany exercised over their auditors seems to 5 modern readers almost miraculous. Such feelings are very rare in a civilised community, and most rare among those who participate most in its improvements. They linger longest among the peasantry.

Poetry produces an illusion on the eye of the mind, 10 as a magic-lantern produces an illusion on the eye of the body. And, as the magic-lantern acts best in a dark room, poetry effects its purpose most completely in a dark age. As the light of knowledge breaks in upon its exhibitions, as the outlines of certainty be- 15 come more and more definite, and the shades of probability more and more distinct, the hues and lineaments of the phantoms which it calls up, grow fainter and fainter. We cannot unite the incompatible advantages of reality and deception, the clear 20 discernment of truth and the exquisite enjoyment of fiction.

[He who, in an enlightened and literary society, aspires to be a great poet, must first become a little child. He must take to pieces the whole web of his 25

\* *Plato*, (429-347, B.C.), a Greek Philosopher of great note.

† *Homer*, the author of the two first and greatest epic poems, which are written in Greek, the 'Iliad' and the 'Odyssey'.

‡ *Mohawks*, a tribe of North American Indians.

mind. He must unlearn much of that knowledge which has perhaps constituted hitherto his chief title to superiority. His very talents will be a hinderance to him. His difficulties will be proportioned to his  
 5 proficiency in the pursuits which are fashionable among his contemporaries; and that proficiency will in general be proportioned to the vigour and activity of his mind. And it is well if, after all his sacrifices and exertions, his works do not resemble a lisping  
 10 man, or a modern ruin. We have seen in our own time great talents, intense labour, and long meditation, employed in this struggle against the spirit of the age, and employed, we will not say absolutely in vain, but with dubious success and feeble applause.]

15 If these reasonings be just, no poet has ever triumphed over greater difficulties than Milton. He received a learned education. He was a profound and elegant classical scholar: he had studied all the mysteries of Rabbinical literature:\* he was intimately  
 20 acquainted with every language of modern Europe from which either pleasure or information was then to be derived. He was perhaps the only great poet of later times who has been distinguished by the excellence of his Latin verse. ^ The genius of Petrarch†  
 25 was scarcely of the first order; and his poems in the ancient language, though much praised by those who

\* *Rabbinical Literature*—literature connected with the doctrine of the Rabbins (*Rabbi*, Heb. 'my master') the Jewish masters of the law.

† *Petrarch* (1304-1374)—Italy's first and greatest lyrical poet.

(His only rivals were Petrarch)

have never read them, are wretched compositions. Cowley, with all his admirable wit and ingenuity, had little imagination : nor indeed do we think his classical diction comparable to that of Milton. [The authority of Johnson is against us on this point. But Johnson 5 had studied the bad writers of the middle ages till he had become utterly insensible to the Augustan\* elegance, and was as ill qualified to judge between two Latin styles, as a habitual drunkard to set up for a wine-taster.]

Versification in a dead language is an exotic, a far-fetched, costly, sickly imitation of that which elsewhere may be found in healthful and spontaneous perfection. The soils on which this rarity flourishes are, in general, as ill suited to the production of vigorous native 15 poetry as the flower-pots of a hot-house to the growth of oaks. That the author of the *Paradise Lost* should have written the *Epistle to Manso*† was truly wonderful. Never before were such marked originality and such exquisite mimicry found together. Indeed, 20 in all the Latin poems of Milton, the artificial manner indispensable to such works is admirably preserved ; while, at the same time, the richness of his fancy and the elevation of his sentiments give to them a peculiar

\* *Augustan*, so-called from the Roman Emperor Augustus (63 B.C.—14 A.D.) whose reign was marked by great excellence of art and literature. The Augustan age of English Literature, *i.e.*, its best period, is usually said to date from the beginning of Elizabeth's reign to the Restoration.

† *Epistle to Manso*, a Latin Poem, addressed by Milton when in Italy, to Manso the Marquis of Villa, a friend of the Italian poet Tasso.

charm, an air of nobleness and freedom, which distinguishes them from all other writings of the same class. They remind us of the amusements of those angelic warriors who composed the cohort of Gabriel :

- 5     ‘ About him exercised heroic games  
       The unarmed youth of heaven. But o’er their heads  
       Celestial armoury, shield, helm, and spear,  
       Hung bright, with diamond flaming and with gold.’

—*Paradise Lost*, iv. 551—554.

- 10 We cannot look upon the sportive exercises for which  
    the genius of Milton ungirds itself, without catching  
    a glimpse of the gorgeous and terrible panoply which  
    it is accustomed to wear. The strength of his imagi-  
    nation triumphed over every obstacle. So intense  
 15 and ardent was the fire of his mind, that it not only  
    was not suffocated beneath the weight of its fuel, but  
    penetrated the whole superincumbent mass with its  
    own heat and radiance.

- It is not our intention to attempt anything like a  
 20 complete examination of the poetry of Milton. The  
    public has long been agreed as to the merit of the most  
    remarkable passages, the incomparable harmony of the  
    numbers, and the excellence of that style which no  
    rival has been able to equal, and no parodist to de-  
 25 grade, which displays in their highest perfection the  
    idiomatic powers of the English tongue, and to which  
    every ancient and every modern language has contri-  
    buted something of grace, of energy, or of music. In  
    the vast field of criticism on which we are entering,



innumerable reapers have already put their sickles; Yet the harvest is so abundant that the negligent search of a straggling gleaner may be rewarded with a sheaf.

The most striking characteristic of the poetry of 5 Milton is the extreme remoteness of the associations by means of which it acts on the reader. Its effect is produced, not so much by what it expresses, as by what it suggests, not so much by the ideas which it directly conveys, as by other ideas which are connected 10 with them. He electrifies the mind through conductors. The most unimaginative man must understand the *Iliad*; Homer gives him no choice, and requires from him no exertion; but takes the whole upon himself, and sets his images in so clear a light 15 that it is impossible to be blind to them. The works of Milton cannot be comprehended or enjoyed, unless the mind of the reader co-operate with that of the writer. He does not paint a finished picture or play for a mere passive listener. He sketches, and leaves 20 others to fill up the outline. He strikes the key-note, and expects his hearer to make out the melody.

We often hear of the magical influence of poetry. The expression in general means nothing, but, applied to the writings of Milton, it is most appropriate. His 25 poetry acts like an incantation. Its merit lies less in its obvious meaning than in its occult power. There would seem, at first sight, to be no more in his words than in other words. But they are words of enchant-

<sup>fracture</sup> <sup>Success</sup> ment. No sooner are they pronounced, than the past  
 is present, and the distant near. New forms of beauty  
 start at once into existence, and all the burial-places of  
 the memory give up their dead. Change the structure  
 5 of the sentence; substitute one synonym for another,  
 and the whole effect is destroyed. The spell loses its  
 power; and he who should then hope to conjure with  
 it, would find himself as much mistaken as Cassim in  
 the Arabian tale, when he stood crying: 'Open Wheat,'  
 10 'Open Barley,' to the door which obeyed no sound but  
 'Open Sesame!'<sup>\*</sup> The miserable failure of Dryden,<sup>†</sup>  
 in his attempt to rewrite some parts of the *Paradise*  
*Lost*, is (a remarkable instance of this,) - an <sup>instance of that</sup>

In support of these observations, we may remark,  
 15 that scarcely any passages in the poems of Milton are  
 more generally known, or more frequently repeated,  
 than those which are little more than muster-rolls of  
 names. They are not always more appropriate or more  
 melodious than other names. But they are charmed  
 20 names. Every one of them is the first link in a long  
 chain of associated ideas. Like the dwelling-place of

<sup>\*</sup> *Sesame* (three syllables)—an oily grain originally from India, and now  
 used in Egypt, and elsewhere in the East. The reference here is to the tale  
 of 'The Forty Thieves,' in the 'Arabian Nights'. "Open Sesame," was  
 the charm by which the door of the robbers' dungeon flew open.

<sup>†</sup> *Dryden*, John (1631-1700), an eminent English poet who translated Vir-  
 gil's 'Æneid,' and wrote 'The Hind and Panther,' &c. Macaulay's re-  
 ference is to Dryden's Opera, based on 'Paradise Lost' and called 'The State  
 of Innocence and Fall of Man'. Dryden asked Milton's leave to adapt  
 'Paradise Lost,' and was answered with a good-humoured "Ay, you may  
 tag my verses".

our infancy revisited in manhood, like the song of our country heard in a strange land, they produce upon us an effect wholly independent of their intrinsic value. One transports us back to a remote period of history. Another places us among the novel scenes and manners of a distant country. A third evokes all the dear classical recollections of childhood, the school-room, the dog-eared Virgil,\* the holiday, and the prize. A fourth brings before us the splendid phantoms of chivalrous romance, the trophied lists, the embroidered housings,† the quaint devices, the haunted forests, the enchanted gardens, the achievements of enamoured knights, and the smiles of rescued princesses. Figures  
imposed  
evident  
Van

In none of the works of Milton is his peculiar manner more happily displayed than in the *Allegro* ‡ and the *Penseroso*. It is impossible to conceive that the mechanism of language can be brought to a more exquisite degree of perfection. "These poems differ from others as ottar of roses differs from ordinary rose water, the close-packed essence from the thin-diluted mixture." They are, indeed, not so much poems as collections of hints, from each of which the reader is to make out a poem for himself. Every epithet is a text for a canto. 10  
15  
20  
Figures  
-p

\* *Dog-eared*—the leaves of the volume being crumpled and turned down at the corners, something like the ears of a dog. *Virgil* (70-19 B.C.), the author of the greatest epic poem in Latin (*Æneid*), as Homer in Greek.

† *Housings*—cloths originally used to keep off dust, afterwards added to saddle; as ornamental.

‡ *Allegro and Penseroso*—two companion lyric poems by Milton, dealing with the contrast of "mirth" and "melancholy".

Byron discussing C and S. G. I will  
be necessary to see if make time re-  
main or typical appeared to dramatic  
writing

20

The *Comus* and the *Samson Agonistes* are works which, though of very different merit, offer some marked points of resemblance. They are both lyric poems in the form of plays. There are perhaps no two kinds of composition so essentially dissimilar as the drama and the ode. The business of the dramatist is to keep himself out of sight, and to let nothing appear but his characters. As soon as he attracts notice to his personal feelings, the illusion is broken. The effect is as unpleasant as that which is produced on the stage by the voice of a prompter, or the entrance of a scene-shifter. Hence it was that the tragedies of Byron\* were his least successful performances. They resemble those pasteboard pictures invented by the friend of children, Mr. Newberry, in which a single movable head goes round twenty different bodies; so that the same face looks out upon us successively, from the uniform of a hussar, the furs of a judge, and the rags of a beggar. In all the characters—patriots and tyrants, haters and lovers—the frown and sneer of Harold were discernible in an instant. But this species of egotism, though fatal to the drama, is the inspiration of the ode. It is the part of the lyric poet to abandon himself, without reserve, to his own emotions.

\* *Byron*, Lord (1788-1824), one of the great names in English poetry. His tragedies here referred to are *Marino Faliero*, the *Two Foscari*, *Manfred*, *Sardanapalus*, *Cain*, and *Werner*. Compare Prof. Nichol's dictum on these. "His so-called Dramas are only poems divided into chapters" (*Byron*, 'English Men of Letters,' p. 142). Byron's chief poem is 'Childe Harold'.

Between these hostile elements many great men have endeavoured to effect an amalgamation, but never with complete success. The Greek Drama, on the model of which the *Samson* was written, sprung from the ode. The dialogue was engrafted on the 5 chorus, and naturally partook of its character. The genius of the greatest of the Athenian dramatists co-operated with the circumstances under which Tragedy made its first appearance. *Æschylus*\* was, head and heart, a lyric poet. In his time, the Greeks had far 10 more intercourse with the East than in the days of Homer; and they had not yet acquired that immense superiority in war, in science, and in the arts, which, in the following generation, led them to treat the Asiatics with contempt. From the narrative of *Hero-* 15 *dotus*,† it should seem that they still looked up with the veneration of disciples to Egypt and Assyria. At this period, accordingly, it was natural that the literature of Greece should be tinged with the Oriental style. And that style, we think, is clearly discernible 20 in the works of *Pindar*‡ and *Æschylus*. The latter often reminds us of the Hebrew writers. The book of Job, indeed, in conduct and diction, bears a considerable

\* *Æschylus*, *Sophocles*, and *Euripides*, are the three great Greek Tragedians; they flourished in the fifth century before Christ.

† *Herodotus*, contemporary in Greece with the three above, but famous as a historian—the oldest of Greek historians.

‡ *Pindar*, also a contemporary, but his field was lyric poetry. Poems in imitation of his manner, in a lofty style, and introducing various metres, are called *Pindaric Odes*. Cf. Gray's 'Bard'.

resemblance to some of his dramas. Considered as plays, his works are absurd: considered as choruses, they are above all praise. If, for instance, we examine the address of Clytemnestra\* to Agamemnon on his  
 5 return, or the description of the seven Argive chiefs, by the principles of dramatic writing, we shall instantly condemn them as monstrous. But, if we forget the characters, and think only of the poetry, we shall admit that it has never been surpassed in energy and  
 10 magnificence. <sup>As the Greek drama</sup> Sophocles made the Greek drama as dramatic as was consistent with its original form. His portraits of men have a sort of similarity; but it is the similarity, not of a painting, but of a bas-relief. It suggests a resemblance, but it does not produce an  
 15 illusion. Euripides attempted to carry the reform further. But it was a task far beyond his powers, perhaps beyond any powers. Instead of correcting what was bad, he destroyed what was excellent. He substituted crutches for stilts, bad sermons for good  
 20 odes.

Milton, it is well known, admired Euripides highly—much more highly than, in our opinion, Euripides deserved. [Indeed the caresses which this partiality leads him to bestow on ‘sad Electra’s poet,’† some-  
 25 times remind us of the beautiful Queen of Fairyland

\* *Clytemnestra, Agamemnon*—personages in Æschylus’ Tragedy of ‘*Agamemnon*’.

† ‘*Sad Electra’s Poet*’—Euripides. One of his plays is called ‘*Electra*’.

kissing the long ears of Bottom.\*] At all events, there can be no doubt that his veneration for the Athenian, whether just or not, was injurious to the *Samson Agonistes*. Had he taken Æschylus for his model, he would have given himself up to the lyric inspiration, 5 and poured out profusely all the treasures of his mind, without bestowing a thought on those dramatic proprieties which the nature of the work rendered it impossible to preserve. In the attempt to reconcile things in their own nature inconsistent, he has failed, 10 as every one else must have failed. We cannot identify ourselves with the characters as in a good play. We cannot identify ourselves with the poet, as in a good ode. The conflicting ingredients, like an acid and an alkali† mixed, neutralise each other. We 15 are by no means insensible to the merits of this celebrated piece, to the severe dignity of the style, the graceful and pathetic solemnity of the opening speech, or the wild and barbaric melody which gives so striking an effect to the choral passages. But we 20 think it, we confess, the least successful effort of the genius of Milton.

The *Comus* <sup>he who had a magic</sup> is framed on the model of the Italian

\* *Bottom*, the weaver in Shakespeare's 'Midsummer Night's Dream'. He is represented in one part of the play, with an ass's head, and Titania, the Queen of the Fairies, through the influence of a spell, takes him for a beautiful youth Adonis, and caresses him fondly.

† *Alkali* (Arabic), a name for certain chemical substances, which have great affinity for acids, and combine with them, forming salts in which the peculiar qualities of both alkali and acid are generally destroyed.

Masque,\* as the *Samson* is framed on the model of the Greek Tragedy. It is certainly the noblest performance of the kind which exists in any language. It is as far superior to the *Faithful Shepherdess*† as the *5 Faithful Shepherdess* is to the *Aminta*‡ or the *Aminta* to the *Pastor Fido*.§ (It was well for) Milton that he had here no Euripides to mislead him. He understood and loved the literature of modern Italy. But he did not feel for it the same veneration which he  
 10 entertained for the remains of Athenian and Roman poetry, consecrated by so many lofty and endearing recollections. The faults, moreover, of his Italian predecessors were of a kind to which (his mind had a deadly antipathy.) He could stoop to a plain style,  
 15 sometimes even to a bald style; but false brilliancy was his utter aversion. His muse had no objection to a russet attire; but she turned with disgust from the finery of Guarini, as tawdry and as paltry as the rags of a chimney-sweeper on May-day.|| Whatever  
 20 ornaments she wears are of massive gold, not only

\* *Masque*, differed from the Drama proper in being written to celebrate a special occasion, and in having music, scenery, and other embellishments then denied to the regular plays.

† *Faithful Shepherdess*, a pastoral drama written by the dramatist John Fletcher (1576-1625).

‡ *Aminta*, an Italian poem by Tasso (1544-1595).

§ *Il Pastor Fido*, 'The Faithful Swain,' also Italian, but the work of Guarini (1537-1612) mentioned below.

|| *May-day*, a general holiday among the lower classes in England.



dazzling to the sight, but capable of standing the severest test of the crucible.\*

Milton attended in the *Comus* to the distinction which he neglected in the *Samson*.; He made it what it ought to be—essentially lyrical, and dramatic only 5 in semblance. He has not attempted a fruitless struggle against a defect inherent in the nature of that species of composition; and he has therefore succeeded wherever success was not impossible. The speeches must be read as majestic soliloquies; and 10 he who so reads them will be enraptured with their eloquence, their sublimity and their music. The interruptions of the dialogue, however, impose a constraint upon the writer, and break the illusion of the reader. The finest passages are those which are 15 lyric in form as well as in spirit. ‘I should much commend,’ says the excellent Sir Henry Wotton,† in a letter to Milton, ‘the tragical part, if the lyrical did not ravish me with a certain dorique delicacy in your songs and odes, whereunto I must plainly confess 20 to you I have seen yet nothing parallel in our language.’ The criticism was just. It is when Milton escapes from the shackles of the dialogue, when he is

\* *Crucible*, a chemist’s melting pot, so called because formerly marked with a cross.

† *Sir Henry Wotton* (1568—1639), a scholar and poet, who had been ambassador to Venice in James I.’s reign. When Milton was living at Horton, in Buckinghamshire, where he wrote the ‘*Comus*,’ Wotton was Provost (Head) of Eton College, close by, and Milton submitted the poem to his criticism.

discharged from the labour of uniting two incongruous styles, when he is at liberty to indulge his choral raptures without reserve, that he rises even above himself. Then, like his own good genius bursting from  
 5 the earthly form and weeds of Thyrsis,\* he stands forth in celestial freedom and beauty ; he seems to cry exultingly :—

‘ Now my task is smoothly done  
 I can fly or I can run ’

10 — *Comus*, 1012, 1013.

to skim the earth, to soar above the clouds, to bathe in the Elysian† dew of the rainbow, and to inhale the balmy smells of nard and cassia, which the musky wings of the zephyr scatter through the cedared  
 15 alleys of the Hesperides.‡

‘ There eternal summer dwells,  
 And west winds, with musky wing,  
 About the cedared alleys fling  
 Nard and cassia’s balmy smells:  
 20 Iris there with humid bow  
 Waters the odorous banks, that blow  
 Flowers of more mingled hue  
 Than her purpled scarf can shew,  
 And drenches with Elysian dew  
 25 (List, mortals, if your ears be true)

\* *Thyrsis*, in the ‘ *Comus*,’ takes the dress of a shepherd, but is really a spirit in disguise.

† *Elysian*, from Elysium, the Paradise of the Greeks. It means nothing more now than delightful.

‡ *Hesperides*, in Greek mythology, the three daughters of Hesperus, who guarded the golden apples of Juno.

Beds of hyacinths and roses,  
Where young Adonis oft reposes,  
Waxing well of his deep wound.'

—*Comus*, 988—1000.

There are several of the minor poems of Milton on 5 which we would willingly make a few remarks. Still more willingly would we enter into a detailed examination of that admirable poem, the *Paradise Regained*, which, strangely enough, is scarcely ever mentioned except as an instance of the blindness of that parental 10 affection which men of letters bear towards the offspring of their intellects. That Milton was mistaken in preferring this work, excellent as it is, to the *Paradise Lost*, we must readily admit. But we are sure that the superiority of the *Paradise Lost* to the *Para- 15* *dise Regained* is not more decided than the superiority of the *Paradise Regained* to every poem which has since made its appearance. But our limits prevent us from discussing the point at length. We hasten on to that extraordinary production which the general suff- 20 rage of critics has placed in the highest class of human compositions.

The only poem of modern times which can be compared with the *Paradise Lost* is the *Divine Comedy*.<sup>\*</sup> The subject of Milton, in some points resembled that 25

<sup>\*</sup> *Divine Comedy* (Divina Commedia), the chief poem of Dante (1265-1321), the greatest of all the poets of Italy; a native of Florence in Tuscany. Hence Macaulay speaks of him below as the Florentine poet, and calls him the Father of Tuscan literature.

*the manner of treatment is quite*

of Dante ; but he ~~has treated it in a~~ widely different manner. We cannot, we think, better illustrate our opinion respecting our own great poet than by contrasting him with the father of Tuscan literature.

5 The poetry of Milton differs from that of Dante as  
*has* the hieroglyphics \* of Egypt differed from the picture-writing of Mexico. The images which Dante employs speak for themselves : they stand simply for what they are. Those of Milton have a signification which  
 10 is often discernible only to the initiated. Their value depends less on what they directly represent than on what they remotely suggest. However strange, however grotesque may be the appearance which Dante undertakes to describe, he never shrinks from describ-  
 15 ing it. He gives us the shape, the colour, the sound, the smell, the taste ; he counts the numbers ; he measures the size. His similes are the illustrations of a traveller. Unlike those of other poets, and especially of Milton, they are introduced in a plain, business-

\* *Hieroglyphics* (literally sacred sculptures). Both those of Egypt and of Mexico, are representations of natural or artificial objects on monuments, used to express language. But the essential difference between the two is that whereas the Egyptian pictures stand for letters, syllables, or words, the Mexican merely reproduce the objects intended to be specified. The Egyptian in fact are a kind of elaborate alphabet which rightly interpreted may be read into words ; the Mexican tell their story directly by depicting the things themselves. For example, the picture of an eagle on an Egyptian monument stands for the letter A ; and the picture of a goose for the letter S ; while on a Mexican monument the picture of a city or of a king, stands for that city or king and nothing more. This is the distinction Macaulay has in view, but it is necessary to explain that even in the case of the Egyptian pictures, the original use was to represent ideas ; the alphabetic and grammatical application being a later development.

like manner, not for the sake of any beauty in the objects from which they are drawn, not for the sake of any ornament which they may impart to the poem, but simply in order to make the meaning of the writer as clear to the reader as it is to himself. The ruins of 5 the precipice which led from the sixth to the seventh circle of hell were like those of the rock which fell into the Adige on the south of Trent. The cataract of Phlegethon was like that of Aqua Cheta at the monastery of St. Benedict. The place where the heretics 10 were confined in burning tombs resembled the vast cemetery of Arles!\*

Now, let us compare with the exact details of Dante 15 the dim intimations of Milton. We will cite a few examples. (The English poet has never thought of 15 taking the measure of Satan. He gives us merely a vague idea of vast bulk. In one passage, the fiend lies stretched out huge in length, floating many a rood, equal in size to the earth-born enemies of Jove, or to the sea-monster which the mariner mistakes for an 20 island. When he addresses himself to battle against the guardian angels, he stands like Teneriffe or Atlas; his stature reaches the sky. Contrast with these descriptions the lines in which Dante has described the gigantic spectre of Nimrod. 'His face seemed to 25

\* It is not considered necessary to clear up all those allusions. The reader will feel the force of Macaulay's contrast, although not able to localise every individual place, and no annotation apart from reading the poems themselves, would render everything clear.

me as long and as broad as the ball of St. Peter's at Rome, and his other limbs were in proportion ; so that the bank, which concealed him from the waist downwards, nevertheless showed so much of him that three  
 5 tall Germans would in vain have attempted to reach to his hair.' We are sensible that we do no justice to the admirable style of the Florentine poet. But Mr. Cary's translation is not at hand ; and our version, however rude is sufficient to illustrate our meaning.

10 / Once more, compare the lazar-house\* in the eleventh book of the *Paradise Lost* with the last ward of Malebolge in Dante. Milton avoids the loathsome details, and takes refuge in indistinct, but solemn and tremendous imagery—Despair hurrying from couch to couch  
 15 to mock the wretches with his attendance ; Death shaking his dart over them, but, in spite of supplications, delaying to strike. What says Dante ? ' There was such a moan there as there would be if all the sick who, between July and September, are in the hospitals  
 20 of Valdichiana, and of the Tuscan swamps, and of Sardinia, were in one pit together ; and such a stench was issuing forth as is wont to issue from decayed limbs.'

We will not take upon ourselves the invidious office  
 25 of settling precedency between two such writers. Each, in his own department, is incomparable ; and each, we may remark, has, wisely or fortunately, taken

\* *Lazar House* (derived from the New Testament Lazarus), a public building for the reception of diseased persons. Also called a Lazaretto (Ital.).

a subject adapted to exhibit his peculiar talent to the greatest advantage. The *Divine Comedy* is a personal narrative. Dante is the eye-witness and ear-witness of that which he relates. He is the very man who has heard the tormented spirits crying out for the second 5 death, who has read the dusky characters on the portal within which there is no hope, who has hidden his face from the terrors of the Gorgon, who has fled from the hooks and the seething pitch of Barbariccia and Diaghignazzo. His own hands have grasped the shaggy 10 sides of Lucifer. His own feet have climbed the mountain of expiation. His own brow has been marked by the purifying angel. The reader would throw aside such a tale in incredulous disgust unless it were told with the strongest air of veracity, with a sobriety even 15 in its horrors, with the greatest precision and multiplicity in its details. The narrative of Milton in this respect differs from that of Dante, as the adventures of Amadis \* differ from those of Gulliver.† The author of *Amadis* would have made his book ridiculous if he 20 had introduced those minute particulars which give such a charm to the work of Swift—the nautical

\* *Amadis*—the hero of a Romance in prose (*Amadis of Gaul*), originally written in Portuguese, in four books, but added to in the Spanish and French translations. He was a poet and a musician, a linguist, and a gallant, a knight errant and a king, the very model of chivalry.

† *Gulliver*, Lemuel, the fictitious hero of Swift's famous travels—a bitter political and social satire under the form of a sailor's book of adventure in strange lands. It is in four parts. 1st part, the voyage to Lilliput (pygmies), 2nd, to Brobdingnag (giants), 3rd, to Laputa (flying island), 4th, to the country of the Houyhnhnms (philosophising horses).

observations, the affected delicacy about names, the official documents transcribed at full length, and all the unmeaning gossip and scandal of the court, springing out of nothing, and tending to nothing. We are  
 5 not shocked at being told that a man, who lived nobody knows when, saw many very strange sights; and we can easily abandon ourselves to the illusion of the romance. But when Lemuel Gulliver, surgeon, now actually resident in Rotherhithe, tells us of pygmies,  
 10 and giants, flying islands and philosophising horses, nothing but such circumstantial touches could produce for a single moment a deception on the imagination.

*in dealing with*  
 Of all the poets, ~~who have~~ introduced into their  
 15 ~~works the agency of~~ supernatural beings, (Milton has succeeded best.) Here Dante decidedly yields to him; and as this is a point on which many rash and ill-considered judgments have been pronounced, we feel inclined to dwell on it a little longer. [The most fatal  
 20 error which a poet can possibly commit in the management of his machinery, is that of attempting to philosophise too much.] Milton has been often censured for ascribing to spirits many functions of which spirits must be incapable. But these objections, though  
 25 sanctioned by eminent names, originate, we venture to say, in profound ignorance of the art of poetry.

*displacement*  
 What is spirit? What are our own minds, the portion of spirit with which we are best acquainted?  
*(interrogative)*  
 We observe certain phenomena, We cannot explain



them into material causes. We therefore infer that there exists something which is not material, But of this something we have no idea. We can define it only by negatives. We can reason about it only by symbols. We use the word, but we have no image of 5 the thing ; and the business of poetry is with images, and not with words. The poet uses words indeed ; but they are merely the instruments of his art, not its objects. They are the materials which he is to dispose in such a manner as to present a picture to the mental 10 eye. And if they are not so disposed, they are no more entitled to be called poetry than a bale of canvas and a box of colours to be called a painting.

Logicians may reason about abstractions. But the great mass of mankind can never feel an interest in 15 them. They must have images. The strong tendency of the multitude, in all ages and nations, to idolatry, can be explained on no other principle. (The first inhabitants of Greece, there is every reason to believe, worshipped one invisible deity,) But the necessity of 20 having something more definite to adore produced, in a few centuries, the innumerable crowd of gods and goddesses. In like manner, the ancient Persians thought it impious to exhibit the Creator under a human form. Yet even these transferred to the sun 25 the worship which, speculatively, they considered due only to the Supreme Mind. The history of the Jews is the record of a continued struggle between pure theism, supported by the most terrible sanctions, and

the strangely fascinating desire of having some visible and tangible object of adoration. Perhaps none of the secondary causes which Gibbon \* has assigned for the rapidity with which Christianity spread over the world, 5 while Judaism scarcely ever acquired a proselyte, operated more powerfully than this feeling. God, the uncreated, the incomprehensible, the invisible, attracted few worshippers. A philosopher might admire so noble a conception, but the crowd turned away in 10 disgust from words which presented no image to their minds. It was before deity embodied in a human form—walking among men, partaking of their infirmities, leaning on their bosoms, weeping over their graves, slumbering in the manger, bleeding on the cross— 15 that the prejudices of the Synagogue,† and the doubts of the Academy, and the pride of the Portico, and the fasces of the Lictor, and the swords of thirty legions, were humbled in the dust! Soon after Christianity had achieved its triumph, the principle which 20 had assisted it began to corrupt it. It became a new Paganism. Patron saints assumed the offices of house-

Gibbon, Edward (1737-1794), the historian, who wrote 'The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire'.

† The *Synagogue* stands for the Jews; the *Academy* for the Platonic philosophers (Plato's lectures were delivered in the Academy a garden in Athens planted by Academos); the *Portico* for the Stoics, disciples of the philosopher Zeno who taught under a portico in Athens; the *fasces of the Lictor* for the highest authorities of Rome, before whom the Lictors carried the fasces or bundle of rods, clearing the way and enforcing marks of respect.

hold gods. St. George\* took the place of Mars; St. Elmo† consoled the mariner for the loss of Castor and Pollux; the Virgin Mother and Cecilia‡ succeeded to Venus§ and the Muses. || The fascination of sex and loveliness was again joined to that of celestial dignity, 5 and the homage of chivalry was blended with that of religion. Reformers have often made a stand against these feelings, but never with more than apparent and partial success. The men who demolished the images in cathedrals have not always been able to demolish 10 those which were enshrined in their minds. It would not be difficult to shew that in politics the same rule holds good. Doctrines, we are afraid, must generally be *embodied* before they can excite a strong public 15 feeling. The multitude is more easily interested for the most unmeaning badge, or the most insignificant name, than for the most important principle.

From these considerations, we infer that no poet 20 who should affect that metaphysical accuracy, for the want of which Milton has been blamed, would escape a disgraceful failure. Still, however, there was another extreme which, though far less dangerous, was also to be avoided. The imaginations of men are in a great

\* *St. George*, the patron saint of England; *Mars*, the god of war.

† *St. Elmo's fire*, the electric light seen playing about the masts of ships in stormy weather. The Romans called it Castor and Pollux.

‡ *St. Cecilia*, the patroness of music, regarded as the inventor of the organ.

§ *Venus*, the goddess of love.

|| *Muses*, the nine fabled goddesses of poetry, music, dancing, &c.

measure under the control of their opinions. The most exquisite art of poetical colouring can produce no illusion, when it is employed to represent that which is at once perceived to be incongruous and  
 5 absurd. Milton wrote in an age of philosophers and theologians. It was necessary, therefore, for him to abstain from giving such a shock to their understandings as might break the charm which it was his object to throw over their imaginations. This is the  
 10 real explanation of the indistinctness and inconsistency with which he has often been reproached. Dr. Johnson acknowledges that it was absolutely necessary for him to clothe his spirits with material forms. 'But,' says he, 'he should have secured the consistency of  
 15 his system by keeping immateriality out of sight, and seducing the reader to drop it from his thoughts.' This is easily said; but what if he could not seduce the reader to drop it from his thoughts? What if the contrary opinion had taken so full a possession of the  
 20 minds of men as to leave no room even for the *half-belief* which poetry requires? Such we suspect to have been the case. It was impossible for the poet to adopt altogether the material or the immaterial system. He therefore took his stand on the debate-  
 25 able ground: he left the whole in ambiguity. He has doubtless, by so doing, laid himself open to the charge of inconsistency; but, though philosophically  
*balance* in the wrong, we cannot but believe that he was poetically in the right. This task, which almost any

other writer would have found impracticable, was easy to him. The peculiar art which he possessed of communicating his meaning circuitously, through a long succession of associated ideas, and of intimating more than he expressed, enabled him to disguise those 5 incongruities which he could not avoid. *Series of*

Poetry which relates to the beings of another world ought to be at once mysterious and picturesque. That of Milton is so. That of Dante is picturesque indeed, beyond any that ever was written. Its effect 10 approaches to that produced by the pencil or the chisel; but it is picturesque to the exclusion of all mystery. This is a fault, indeed, on the right side, a fault inseparable from the plan of his poem, which, as we have already observed, rendered the utmost 15 accuracy of description necessary. Still, it is a fault. His supernatural agents excite an interest, but it is not the mysterious interest which is proper to supernatural agents. We feel that we could talk with his ghosts and demons, without any emotion of unearthly 20 awe. We could, like Don Juan,\* ask them to supper, and eat heartily in their company. Dante's angels are good men with wings. His devils are spiteful, ugly executioners. His dead men are merely living men in strange situations. The scene which passes 25 between the poet and Facinata is justly celebrated. *Almright*

\* *Don Juan*—The story referred to is not in Byron's Poem of 'Don Juan,' but in Mozart's Opera of 'Don Giovanni'. Don Juan asks a statue to a banquet, and to his amazement, sees the statue place itself at the board.

Still Facinata in the burning tomb is exactly what Facinata would have been at an *auto da fe*.\* Nothing can be more touching than the first interview of Dante and Beatrice.† Yet what is it but a lovely woman 5 chiding, with sweet, austere composure, the lover for whose affection she is grateful, but whose vices she reprobates? The feelings which give the passage its charm would suit the streets of Florence as well as the summit of the Mount of Purgatory.

10 The Spirits of Milton are unlike those of almost all other writers. His Fiends, in particular, are wonderful creations. They are not metaphysical abstractions. They are not wicked men. They are not ugly beasts. They have no horns, no tails, none of the fee-fa-fum 15 of Tasso and Klopstock.‡ They have just enough in common with human nature to be intelligible to human beings. Their characters are, like their forms, marked by a certain dim resemblance to those of men, but exaggerated to gigantic dimensions, and 20 veiled in mysterious gloom.

\* *Auto da fe* (Portuguese—an act of Faith), a day set apart by the Inquisition for the examination of 'heretics'.

† *Beatrice*—Dante, when a boy of nine, saw at a family party Beatrice Portinaci, then eight years old, and a love sprang up in his heart that became the poetical inspiration of his life. The 'Divine Comedy' depicts a vision in which the poet is conducted through Hell, Purgatory, and the several heavens, by first Virgil, then Beatrice, and lastly St. Bernard. It is this meeting of Beatrice and Dante in the other world that Macaulay refers to.

‡ *Tasso* (1544-1595), an Italian Epic poet, his great Epic being 'Gerusalemme Liberata' (Jerusalem delivered). *Klopstock* (1724-1803), a German poet who wrote on religious subjects.

Perhaps the gods and demons of Æschylus may best bear a comparison with the angels and devils of Milton. The style of the Athenian had, as we have remarked, something of the vagueness and tenor of the Oriental character; and the same peculiarity may 5 be traced in his mythology. It has nothing of the amenity and elegance which we generally find in the superstitions of Greece. All is rugged, barbaric, and colossal. His legends seem to harmonize less with the fragrant groves and graceful porticos in which his 10 countrymen paid their vows to the god of light and goddess of desire, then with those huge and grotesque labyrinths of eternal granite, in which Egypt enshrined her mystic Osiris,\* or in which Hindustan still bows down to her seven-headed idols. His favourite gods 15 are those of the elder generations—the sons of heaven and earth, compared with whom Jupiter himself was a stripling and an upstart—the gigantic Titans† and the inexorable Furies.‡ Foremost among his creations of this class stands Prometheus,§ half fiend, 20 half redeemer, the friend of man, the sullen and im-

\* *Osiris* (in Egyptian mythology), judge of the dead, and potentate of the kingdom of the ghosts.

† *Titans* (in classical mythology), the children of heaven and earth, a race of giants who warred against Jupiter.

‡ *Furies*, the goddesses of fate, who led their victims into the most fearful calamities.

§ *Prometheus*—the hero of Æschylus' tragedy of that name. He made men of clay and stole fire from heaven to animate them, and for this he was chained by Jupiter to Mount Caucasus, where an eagle preyed daily on his liver.

placable enemy of heaven. He bears undoubtedly a considerable resemblance to the Satan of Milton. In both we find the same impatience of control, the same ferocity, the same unconquerable pride. In  
 5 both characters also are mingled, though in very different proportions, some kind and generous feelings. Prometheus, however, is hardly superhuman enough. He talks too much of his chains and his uneasy posture: he is rather too much depressed and agi-  
 10 tated. His resolution seems to depend on the knowledge which he possesses that he holds the fate of his torturer in his hands, and that the hour of his release will surely come. But Satan is a creature of another sphere. The might of his intellectual nature is vic-  
 15 torious over the extremity of pain. Amidst agonies which cannot be conceived without horror, he deliberates, resolves, and even exults. Against the sword of Michael, against the thunder of Jehovah, against the flaming lake, and the marl burning with solid fire,  
 20 against the prospect of an eternity of unintermittent misery, his spirit bears up unbroken, resting on its own innate energies, requiring no support from any thing external, nor even from hope itself!

To return for a moment to the parallel which we  
 25 have been attempting to draw between Milton and Dante, we would add, that the poetry of these great men has in a considerable degree taken its character from their moral qualities. They are not egotists. They rarely obtrude their idiosyncrasies on their



readers. They have nothing in common with those modern beggars for fame, who extort a pittance from the compassion of the inexperienced, by exposing the nakedness and sores of their minds. Yet it would be difficult to name two writers whose works have been 5 more completely, though undesignedly, coloured by their personal feelings.

The character of Milton was peculiarly distinguished by loftiness of thought ; that of Dante by intensity of feeling. In every line of the *Divine Comedy* we 10 discern the asperity which is produced by pride struggling with misery. There is perhaps no work in the world so deeply and uniformly sorrowful. The melancholy of Dante was no fantastic caprice. It was not, as far as at this distance of time can be 15 judged, the effect of external circumstances. It was from within. Neither love nor glory, neither the conflicts of earth, nor the hope of heaven, could dispel it. It turned every consolation and every pleasure into its own nature. It resembled that noxious Sardi- 20 nian soil of which the intense bitterness is said to have been perceptible, even in its honey. His mind was, in the noble language of the Hebrew poet, 'a land of darkness, as darkness itself, and where the light was as darkness !' The gloom of his character 25 discolours all the passions of men and all the face of nature, and tinges with its own livid hue the flowers of Paradise and the glories of the eternal throne ! All the portraits of him are singularly characteristic. No

person can look on the features, noble even to ruggedness, the dark furrows of the cheek, the haggard and woful stare of the eye, the sullen and contemptuous curve of the lip, and doubt that they  
5 belonged to a man too proud and too sensitive to be happy.

Milton was, like Dante, a statesman and a lover—and, like Dante, he had been unfortunate in ambition and in love. He had survived his health and his sight,  
10 the comforts of his home, and the prosperity of his party. Of the great men by whom he had been distinguished at his entrance into life, some had been taken away from the evil to come; some had carried into foreign climates their unconquerable hatred of  
15 oppression; some were pining in dungeons; and some had poured forth their blood on scaffolds. Venal and licentious scribblers, with just sufficient talent to clothe the thoughts of a pander in the style of a bellman, were now the favourite writers of the sovereign  
20 and of the public. It was a loathsome herd—which could be compared to nothing so fitly as to the rabble of Comus, grotesque monsters, half bestial, half human, dropping with wine, bloated with gluttony, and reeling in obscene dances. Amidst these his muse was placed,  
25 like the chaste lady of the masque, lofty, spotless, and serene—to be chattered at, and pointed at, and grinned at, by the whole rabble of satyrs and goblins. If ever despondency and asperity could be excused in any man, it might have been excused in Milton. But the

strength of his mind overcame every calamity. Neither blindness, nor gout, nor age, nor penury, nor domestic afflictions, nor political disappointments, nor abuse, nor proscription, nor neglect, had power to disturb his sedate and majestic patience. His spirits do not seem 5 to have been high, but they were singularly equable. His temper was serious, perhaps stern; but it was a temper which no sufferings could render sullen or fretful. Such as it was, when, on the eve of great events, he returned from his travels, in the prime of 10 health and manly beauty,\* loaded with literary distinctions, and glowing with patriotic hopes, such it continued to be—when, after having experienced every calamity which is incident to our nature, old, poor, sightless, and disgraced, he retired to his hovel to die! 15

Hence it was, that, though he wrote the *Paradise Lost* at a time of life when images of beauty and tenderness are in general beginning to fade, even from those minds in which they have not been effaced by anxiety and disappointment, he adorned it with all 20 that is most lovely and delightful in the physical and in the moral world. Neither Theocritus\* nor Ariosto† had a finer or a more healthful sense of the pleasantness of external objects, or loved better to luxuriate amidst sunbeams and flowers, the songs of nightingales, 25

\* *Theocritus*, one of the great names in Pastoral Poetry. He wrote in Greek, and flourished in the third century before Christ.

† *Ariosto* (1474-1533), an Italian poet, who wrote a high epic, 'Orlando Furioso'.

the juice of summer fruits, and the coolness of shady fountains. His conception of love unites all the voluptuousness of the Oriental harem, and all the gallantry of the chivalric tournament, with all the pure and  
 5 quiet affection of an English fireside. His poetry reminds us of the miracles of Alpine scenery. Nooks and dells, beautiful as fairy-land, are embosomed in its most rugged and gigantic elevations. The roses and myrtles bloom unchilled on the verge of the ava-  
 10 lanche.

Traces indeed of the peculiar character of Milton may be found in all his works ; but it is most strongly displayed in the sonnets. Those remarkable poems have been undervalued by critics who have not under-  
 15 stood their nature. They have no epigrammatic point. There is none of the ingenuity of Filicaja\* in the thought, none of the hard and brilliant enamel of Petrarch in the style. They are simple but majestic records of the feelings of the poet ; as little tricked  
 20 out for the public eye as his diary would have been.

A victory, an expected attack upon the city, a momentary fit of depression or exultation, a jest thrown out against one of his books, a dream which, for a short time restored to him that beautiful face over which the  
 25 grave had closed for ever, led him to musings which, without effort, shaped themselves into verse. The unity of sentiment and severity of style which characterise these little pieces, remind us of the Greek

\* *Filicaja* (1642-1707), also an Italian poet, but lyrical.

Anthology,\* or perhaps still more of the Collects,† of the English Liturgy:‡ the noble poem on the Massacres of Piedmont is strictly a collect in verse.

The sonnets are more or less striking, according as the occasions which gave birth to them are more or less interesting. But they are, almost without exception, dignified by a sobriety and greatness of mind to which we know not where to look for a parallel. It would indeed be scarcely safe to draw any decided inferences as to the character of a writer, from passages directly egotistical. But the qualities which we have ascribed to Milton, though perhaps most strongly marked in those parts of his works which treat of his personal feelings, are distinguishable in every page, and impart to all his writings, prose and poetry, English, 15 Latin, and Italian, a strong family likeness.

His public conduct was such as was to be expected from a man of a spirit so high, and an intellect so powerful. He lived at one of the most memorable eras in the history of mankind; at the very crisis of the 20 great conflict between Oromasdes and Arimanes §—liberty and despotism, reason and prejudice. That great battle was fought for no single generation, for no single land. The destinies of the human race were

\* *Anthology*, collection or selection of flowers of literature.

† *Collects*, short comprehensive prayers.

‡ *Liturgy*, formulary of public devotions.

§ *Oromasdes*, the good genius; and *Arimanes*, the evil demon of the Persians.

staked on the same cast with the freedom of the  
 English people. Then were first proclaimed those  
 mighty principles which have since worked their way  
 into the depths of the American forests, which have  
 5 roused Greece from the slavery and degradation of  
 two thousand years, and which, from one end of  
 Europe to the other, have kindled an unquenchable  
 fire in the hearts of the oppressed, and loosed the  
 knees of the oppressors with a strange and unwonted  
 10 fear! Of those principles, then struggling for their  
 infant existence, Milton was the most devoted and elo-  
 quent literary champion. We need not say how much  
 we admire his public conduct. But we cannot disguise  
 from ourselves that a large portion of his countrymen  
 15 still think it unjustifiable. The civil war, indeed, has  
 been more discussed, and is less understood, than any  
 event in English history. The Roundheads laboured  
 under the disadvantage of which the lion in the fable  
 complained so bitterly.\* Though they were the con-  
 20 querors, their enemies were the painters. As a body,  
 they had done their utmost to decry and ruin litera-  
 ture; and literature was even with them, as, in the  
 long run, it always is with its enemies. The best book

\* The fable referred to is as follows :—A man and a lion travelled together  
 through the forest. They soon began to boast of their respective superiority  
 to each other in strength and prowess. As they were disputing they passed  
 a statue, carved in stone which represented "A Lion strangled by a Man".  
 The traveller pointed to it and said :—"See there! how strong we are and  
 how we prevail over even the king of beasts." The Lion replied :—"This  
 statue was made by one of you men. If the Lions knew how to erect statues,  
 you would see the man placed under the paw of the Lion."

on their side of the question is the charming *Memoir of Mrs. Hutchinson*.\* May's *History of the Parliament* † is good ; but it breaks off at the most interesting crisis of the struggle. The performance of Ludlow ‡ is very foolish and violent ; and most of the later writers who 5 have espoused the same cause—Oldmixon,§ for instance, and Catherine Macaulay ||—have, to say the least, been more distinguished by zeal than either by candour or by skill. On the other side are the most authoritative and the most popular historical works in 10 our language, that of Clarendon,¶ and that of Hume.\*\* The former is not only ably written and full of valuable information, but has also an air of dignity and sincerity which makes even the prejudices and errors with which it abounds respectable. Hume, from whose fascinat- 15 ing narrative the great mass of the reading public are still contented to take their opinions, hated religion so

\* *Mrs. Hutchinson* (1620-1659), wrote a memoir of her husband, Colonel Hutchinson, the Governor of Nottingham, in the civil war. The book was not published till 1806.

† *May's History of the Parliament*, printed in 1647, and therefore covering only a part of the ground. May, who was Secretary to the Parliament, died in 1650.

‡ *Ludlow*, General, wrote *Memoirs of Cromwell*. With Macaulay's judgment compare Carlyle's—'That solid but wooden head of his'.

§ *Oldmixon*, John (1673-1742), wrote a *History of England* (1730-1739).

|| *Mrs. Catherine Macaulay* (1733-1791). Her *History* covered the period from the accession of James I. to the elevation of the House of Hanover.

¶ *Clarendon*, Earl of (1668-1674), wrote the 'History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England'.

\*\* *Hume*, David (1711-1776), more famous as a philosopher than as a historian, wrote the 'History of England'.

much, that he hated liberty for having been allied with religion—and has pleaded the cause of tyranny with the dexterity of an advocate, while affecting the impartiality of a judge.

5 The public conduct of Milton must be approved or condemned, according as the resistance of the people to Charles I. shall appear to be justifiable or criminal. We shall therefore make no apology for dedicating a few pages to the discussion of that interesting and  
 10 most important question. We shall not argue it on general grounds ; we shall not recur to those primary principles from which the claim of any government to the obedience of its subjects is to be deduced ; it is a vantage-ground to which we are entitled ; but we will  
 15 relinquish it. We are, on this point, so confident of superiority, that we have no objection to imitate the ostentatious generosity of those ancient knights, who vowed to joust without helmet or shield against all enemies, and to give their antagonists the advantage  
 20 of sun and wind. We will take the naked constitutional question. We confidently affirm, that every reason which can be urged in favour of the Revolution of 1688, may be urged with at least equal force in favour of what is called the Great Rebel-  
 25 lion.

In one respect only, we think, can the warmest admirers of Charles venture to say that he was a better sovereign than his son. He was not, in name and profession, a Papist ; we say in name and profes-



sion—because both Charles himself and his miserable creature Laud,\* while they abjured the innocent badges of Popery, retained all its worst vices, a complete subjection of reason to authority, a weak preference of form to substance, a childish passion for 5 mummeries, an idolatrous veneration for a priestly character, and, above all, a stupid and ferocious intolerance. This, however, we waive. We will concede that Charles was a good Protestant; but we say that his Protestantism does not make the slightest 10 distinction between his case and that of James.

The principles of the Revolution have often been grossly misrepresented. There is a certain class of men, who, while they profess to hold in reverence the great names and great actions of former times, 15 never look at them for any other purpose than in order to find in them some excuse for existing abuses. In every venerable precedent, they pass by what is essential, and take only what is accidental: they keep out of sight what is beneficial, and hold up to public 20 imitation all that is defective. If, in any part of any great example, there be anything unsound, these flesh-flies detect it with an unerring instinct, and dart upon it with a ravenous delight. They cannot always prevent the advocates of a good measure from com- 25 passing their end; but they feel, with their prototype, that—

\* *Laud* (1573-1645) Archbishop of Canterbury, the great enemy of Puritanism and the champion of Ritualism.

‘Their labours must be to pervert that end,  
And out of good still to find means of evil.’

—*Paradise Lost*, i., 164, 165.

To the blessings which England has derived from  
5 the Revolution, these people are utterly insensible.  
The expulsion of a tyrant, the solemn recognition of  
popular rights, liberty, security, toleration, all go for  
nothing with them. One sect there was,\* which,  
from unfortunate temporary causes, it was thought  
10 necessary to keep under close restraint. One part of  
the empire† there was, so unhappily circumstanced,  
that at that time its misery was necessary to our  
happiness, and its slavery to our freedom! These  
are the parts of the Revolution which the politicians  
15 of whom we speak love to contemplate, and which  
seem to them, not indeed to vindicate, but in some  
degree to palliate the good which it has produced.  
Talk to them of Naples, of Spain, or of South Ame-  
rica! they stand forth, zealots for the doctrine of  
20 divine right—which has now come back to us, like a  
thief from transportation, under the *alias* of legiti-  
macy. But mention the miseries of Ireland! Then  
William is a hero. Then Somers and Shrewsbury‡  
are great men. Then the Revolution is a glorious  
25 era! The very same persons who, in this country,  
never omit an opportunity of reviving every wretched

\* *One Sect*—the Roman Catholics.

† *One part of the empire*—Ireland.

‡ *Somers and Shrewsbury*—high officials of state in William III.'s reign—Somers, Lord Chancellor; and Shrewsbury, Secretary of State.

Jacobite slander respecting the Whigs of that period, have no sooner crossed St. George's Channel,\* than they begin to fill their bumpers to the glorious and immortal memory. They may truly boast that they look not at men but at measures. So that evil be 5 done, they care not who does it—the arbitrary Charles, or the liberal William, Ferdinand the Catholic,† or Frederick the Protestant!‡ On such occasions their deadliest opponents may reckon upon their candid construction. The bold assertions of these people 10 have of late impressed a large portion of the public with an opinion, that James II. was expelled simply because he was a Catholic, and that the Revolution was essentially a Protestant Revolution.

But this certainly was *not* the case. Nor can any 15 person who has acquired more knowledge of the history of those times than is to be found in Goldsmith's *Abridgment*,§ believe that, if James had held his own religious opinions without wishing to make proselytes, or if, wishing even to make proselytes, he 20 had contented himself with exerting only his consti-

\* *Crossed St. George's Channel*—that is, 'gone over to Ireland'.

† *Ferdinand the Catholic* (1452-1516)—Ferdinand V. of Spain, during whose reign, and that of his wife Isabella, the Inquisition was established.

‡ *Frederick the Protestant* (1596-1632)—Frederick V., Elector Palatine, head of the Protestant Princes of Germany, and son-in-law of King James I. of England.

§ *Goldsmith*, Oliver (1728-1774), famous for his poems—the 'Deserted Village' and the 'Traveller,' as well as for his novel, the 'Vicar of Wakefield'; tried his hand also, though without much success, at compiling a History of England.

tutional influence for that purpose, the Prince of Orange would ever have been invited over. Our ancestors, we suppose, knew their own meaning. And, if we may believe them, their hostility was  
 5 *primarily*, not to Popery, but to *Tyranny*. They did not drive out a tyrant because he was a Catholic ; but they excluded Catholics from the crown, because they thought them likely to be tyrants. The ground  
 10 on which they, in their famous resolution, declared the throne vacant, was this, ‘that James had broken the fundamental laws of the kingdom’. Every man, therefore, who approves of the Revolution of 1688, must hold that *the breach of fundamental laws on the part of the sovereign* justifies resistance. The question  
 15 then is this : Had Charles I. broken the fundamental laws of England ?

No person can answer in the negative, unless he refuses credit, not merely to all the accusations brought against Charles by his opponents, but to the  
 20 narratives of the warmest royalists, and to the confessions of the king himself. If there be any truth in *any* historian of *any* party who has related the events of that reign, the conduct of Charles, from his accession to the meeting of the Long Parliament,\* had  
 25 been a continued course of oppression and treachery. Let those who applaud the Revolution and condemn

\* *The Long Parliament*—Charles came to the throne in 1625. The Long Parliament met in 1640, and, though temporarily suspended by Cromwell in 1653, it was recalled after Cromwell’s death, and not finally dissolved till 1660, hence its name.

the Rebellion, mention one act of James II. to which a parallel is not to be found in the history of his father. Let them lay their fingers on a single article in the declaration of right,\* presented by the two houses to William and Mary, which Charles is not 5 acknowledged to have violated. He had, according to the testimony of his own friends, usurped the functions of the legislature, raised taxes without the consent of Parliament, and quartered troops on the people in the most illegal and vexatious manner. 10 Not a single session of parliament had passed without some unconstitutional attack on the freedom of debate. The right of petition was grossly violated. Arbitrary judgments, exorbitant fines, and unwarranted imprisonments, were grievances of daily and hourly 15 occurrence. If these things do not justify resistance, the Revolution was treason: if they do, the Great Rebellion was laudable.

But, it is said, why not adopt milder measures? Why, after the king had consented to so many re- 20 forms, and renounced so many oppressive prerogatives, did the Parliament continue to rise in their demands at the risk of civil war? The ship-money†

\* *The Declaration of Right.* A Document asserting the ancient rights and liberties of England. On the assurance that these would be preserved by William, Parliament offered the crown to him and his wife.

† *Ship-money.* One of Charles I.'s devices for raising money. He extended the tax formerly levied on maritime counties to every shire in the kingdom. It was John Hampden who first made a stand against this grievance.

had been given up. The Star-chamber\* had been abolished. Provision had been made for the frequent convocation and secure deliberation of Parliaments. Why not pursue an end confessedly good, by peace-  
 5 able and regular means? We recur again to the analogy of the Revolution. Why was James driven from the throne? Why was he not retained upon conditions? He, too, had offered to call a free Par-  
 10 liament, and to submit to its decision all the matters in dispute. Yet we praise our forefathers, who preferred a revolution, a disputed succession, a dynasty of strangers, twenty years of foreign and intestine war, a standing army, and a national debt, to the rule, however restricted, of a tried and proved tyrant.  
 15 The Long Parliament acted on the same principle, and is entitled to the same praise. They could not trust the king. He had, no doubt, passed salutary laws. But what assurance had they that he would not break them? He had renounced oppressive  
 20 prerogatives. But where was the security that he would not resume them? They had to deal with a man whom no tie could bind, a man who made and broke promises with equal facility, a man whose honour had been a hundred times pawned—and  
 25 never redeemed.

\* *Star-Chamber.* So called because it sat in a room known by that name. It was a court of members of the privy council, together with two chief justices, who by degrees usurped a power of punishing anything that could be called contempt for the king's authority. It finally became almost inquisitorial in its character.

Here, indeed, the Long Parliament stands on still stronger ground than the Convention of 1688. No action of James can be compared, for wickedness and impudence, to the conduct of Charles with respect to the *Petition of Right*.<sup>\*</sup> The Lords and Commons 5 present him with a bill in which the constitutional limits of his power are marked out. He hesitates; he evades; at last he bargains to give his assent for five subsidies. The bill receives his solemn assent. The subsidies are voted. But no sooner is the tyrant 10 relieved, than he returns at once to all the arbitrary measures which he had bound himself to abandon, and violates all the clauses of the very act which he had been paid to pass.

For more than ten years the people had seen the 15 rights, which were theirs by a double claim, by immemorial inheritance and by recent purchase, infringed by the perfidious king who had recognised them. At length circumstances compelled Charles to summon another Parliament: another chance was 20 given them for liberty. Were they to throw it away as they had thrown away the former? Were they again to be cozened by *le roi le veut*?† Were they again to advance their money on pledges which had

<sup>\*</sup> *Petition of Right* (1628)—a bill condemning Charles' illegal practices, arbitrary taxes, and imprisonment, forced billeting of soldiers upon the people, and exercise of martial law.

† *Le roi le veut*—the king wishes it. The phrase by which is announced the royal assent to bills in Parliament. It is a survival from the time when French was the language of the court and of public business, particularly in the 13th century.

been forfeited over and over again? Were they to lay a second petition of right at the foot of the throne, to grant another lavish aid in exchange for another unmeaning ceremony, and then to take their departure, 5 till, after ten years more of fraud and oppression, their prince should again require a supply, and again repay it with a perjury? They were compelled to choose whether they would *trust* a tyrant or *conquer* him. We think that they choose wisely and nobly.

10 The advocates of Charles, like the advocates of other malefactors against whom overwhelming evidence is produced, generally decline all controversy about the facts, and content themselves with calling testimony to character. He had so many private 15 virtues! And had James II. no private virtues? Was even Oliver Cromwell, his bitterest enemies themselves being judges, destitute of private virtues? And what, after all, are the virtues ascribed to Charles? A religious zeal, not more sincere than that 20 of his son, and fully as weak and narrow-minded, and a few of the ordinary household decencies which half the tombstones in England claim for those who lie beneath them. A good father! A good husband! Ample apologies indeed for fifteen years of persecu- 25 tion, tyranny, and falsehood.

We charge him with having broken his coronation oath—and we are told that he kept his marriage vow! We accuse him of having given up his people to the merciless inflictions of the most hot-headed and hard-



hearted of prelates ; and the defence is, that he took his little son on his knee and kissed him ! We censure him for having violated the articles of the Petition of Right, after having, for good and valuable consideration, promised to observe them ; and we are 5 informed, that he was accustomed to hear prayers at six o'clock in the morning ! It is to such considerations as these, together with his Vandyke\* dress, his handsome face, and his peaked beard, that he owes, we verily believe, most of his popularity with the pre- 10 sent generation.

For ourselves, we own that we do not understand the common phrase, a good man but a bad king. We can as easily conceive a good man and an unnatural father, or a good man and a treacherous friend. We 15 cannot, in estimating the character of an individual, leave out of our consideration his conduct in the most important of all human relations. And if, in that relation, we find him to have been selfish, cruel, and deceitful, we shall take the liberty to call him a bad 20 man, in spite of all his temperance at table, and all his regularity at chapel.

We cannot refrain from adding a few words respecting a topic on which the defenders of Charles are fond of dwelling. If, they say, he governed his 25 people ill, he at least governed them after the example

\* *Vandyke* (1599-1641)—a great portrait painter who, though a native of Flanders, spent the latter part of his life in England, and has left paintings of all the chief historical characters of Charles' court.

of his predecessors. If he violated their privileges, it was because those privileges had not been accurately defined. No act of oppression has ever been imputed to him, which has not a parallel in the annals of the  
 5 Tudors. This point Hume has laboured, with an art which is as discreditable in a historical work as it would be admirable in a forensic address. The answer is short, clear, and decisive. Charles had assented to the Petition of Right. *He had renounced*  
 10 the oppressive powers said to have been exercised by his predecessors, and he had renounced them for money. He was not entitled to set up his antiquated claims against his own recent release.

These arguments are so obvious, that it may seem  
 15 superfluous to dwell upon them. But those who have observed how much the events of that time are misrepresented and misunderstood, will not blame us for stating the case simply. It is a case of which the simplest statement is the strongest.

20 The enemies of the Parliament, indeed, rarely choose to take issue on the great points of the question. They content themselves with exposing some of the crimes and follies to which public commotions necessarily give birth. They bewail the unmerited fate of  
 25 Strafford.\* They execrate the lawless violence of the army. They laugh at the scriptural names of the

\* *Strafford*, Earl of—one of Charles' instruments in the introduction of arbitrary and tyrannical government. He was beheaded in 1641, and with him died the system of government he had endeavoured to establish.

preachers. Major-generals fleecing their districts; soldiers revelling on the spoils of a ruined peasantry; upstarts, enriched by the public plunder, taking possession of the hospitable firesides and hereditary trees of the old gentry; boys smashing the beautiful windows 5 of cathedrals; Quakers riding naked through the market-place; fifth-monarchy-men\* shouting for King Jesus; agitators lecturing from the tops of tubs on the fate of Agag—all these, they tell us, were the offspring of the Great Rebellion. 10

Be it so. We are not careful to answer in this matter. These charges, were they infinitely more important, would not alter our opinion of an event which alone has made us to differ from the slaves who crouch beneath the sceptres of Brandenburg† and 15 Braganza.‡ Many evils, no doubt, *were* produced by the civil war. They were the price of our liberty. Has the acquisition been worth the sacrifice? It is the nature of the devil of tyranny to tear and rend the body which he leaves. Are the miseries of continued 20 possession less horrible than the struggles of the tremendous exorcism?

\* *Fifth-monarchy-men.* One of the numerous sects that sprang out of Puritanism. They believed themselves called on to prepare the way for the reign on earth of Christ's saints. Having read of the 'Four Great Monarchies,' Assyrian, Persian, Greek, and Roman, they reckoned their expected kingdom as the '*Fifth Monarchy*'.

† *Brandenburgh.* The Elector of Brandenburg (a province of Prussia) became King of Prussia (Frederick I., father of Frederick the Great) in 1701.

‡ *Braganza.* A city of Portugal which gives its name to the House of Braganza, the present ruling dynasty in Portugal.

If it were possible that a people brought up under an intolerant and arbitrary system could subvert that system without acts of cruelty and folly, half the objections to despotic power would be removed. We  
 5 should, in that case, be compelled to acknowledge, that it at least produces no pernicious effects on the intellectual and moral character of a people. We deplore the outrages which accompany revolutions. But the more violent the outrages, the more assured  
 10 we feel that *a revolution was necessary*. The violence of those outrages will always be proportioned to the ferocity and ignorance of the people; and the ferocity and ignorance of the people will be proportioned to the oppression and degradation under which they  
 15 have been accustomed to live. Thus it was in our civil war. The rulers in church and state reaped only that which they had sown. They had prohibited free discussion; they had done their best to keep the people unacquainted with their duties and  
 20 their rights. The retribution was just and natural. If they suffered from popular ignorance, it was because they had themselves taken away the key of knowledge. If they were assailed with blind fury, it was because they had exacted an equally blind sub-  
 25 mission.

It is the character of such revolutions that we always see the worst of them at first. Till men have been for some time free, they know not how to use their freedom. The natives of wine countries are

always sober. In climates where wine is a rarity, intemperance abounds. A newly liberated people may be compared to a northern army encamped on the Rhine or the Xeres.\* It is said that, when soldiers in such a situation first find themselves able to 5 indulge without restraint in such a rare and expensive luxury, nothing is to be seen but intoxication. Soon, however, plenty teaches discretion; and after wine has been for a few months their daily fare, they become more temperate than they had ever been in 10 their own country. In the same manner, the final and permanent fruits of liberty are wisdom, moderation, and mercy. Its immediate effects are often atrocious crimes, conflicting errors, scepticism on points the most clear, dogmatism on points the most 15 mysterious. It is just at this crisis that its enemies love to exhibit it. They pull down the scaffolding from the half-finished edifice; they point to the flying dust, the falling bricks, the comfortless rooms, the frightful irregularity of the whole appearance; and then ask in 20 scorn where the promised splendour and comfort is to be found? If such miserable sophisms were to prevail, there would never be a good house or a good government in the world.

Ariosto tells a pretty story† of a fairy who, by some 25 mysterious law of her nature, was condemned to

\* *Xeres*. A town of Andalusia (not a river) in Spain, the centre of a district famous for its splendid vineyards. "Sherry" wine takes its name from this town.

† *A pretty story*—in his great poem 'Orlando Furioso,' canto 43.

appear, at certain seasons, in the form of a foul and poisonous snake. Those who injured her during the period of her disguise, were for ever excluded from participation in the blessings which she bestowed.

5 But to those who, in spite of her loathsome aspect, pitied and protected her, she afterwards revealed herself in the beautiful and celestial form which was natural to her, accompanied their steps, granted all their wishes, filled their houses with wealth, made them

10 happy in love and victorious in war. Such a spirit is Liberty. At times she takes the form of a hateful reptile. She grovels, she hisses, she stings. But woe to those who in disgust shall venture to crush her ! And happy are those who, having dared to receive

15 her in her degraded and frightful shape, shall at length be rewarded by her in the time of her beauty and her glory !

There is only one cure for the evils which newly acquired freedom produces—and that cure is *freedom* !

20 When a prisoner first leaves his cell, he cannot bear the light of day—he is unable to discriminate colours or to recognise faces. But the remedy is, not to remand him into his dungeon, but to accustom him to the rays of the sun. The blaze of truth and liberty

25 may at first dazzle and bewilder nations which have become half blind in the house of bondage. But let them gaze on, and they will soon be able to bear it. In a few years men learn to reason. The extreme violence of opinions subsides. Hostile theories correct

each other. The scattered elements of truth cease to conflict, and begin to coalesce. And at length a system of justice and order is educed out of the chaos.

Many politicians of our time are in the habit of laying it down as a self-evident proposition, that no 5 people ought to be free till they are fit to use their freedom. The maxim is worthy of the fool in the old story, who resolved not to go into the water till he had learned to swim ! If men are to wait for liberty till they become wise and good in slavery, they may 10 indeed wait for ever.

Therefore it is that we decidedly approve of the conduct of Milton and the other wise and good men who, in spite of much that was ridiculous and hateful in the conduct of their associates, stood firmly by the 15 cause of public liberty. We are not aware that the poet has been charged with personal participation in any of the blameable excesses of that time. The favourite topic of his enemies is the line of conduct which he pursued with regard to the execution of the 20 king. Of that celebrated proceeding we by no means approve. Still we must say, in justice to the many eminent persons who concurred in it, and in justice more particularly to the eminent person who defended it, that nothing can be more absurd than the imputations 25 which, for the last hundred and sixty years, it has been the fashion to cast upon the regicides. We have throughout abstained from appealing to first principles. We will not appeal to them now. We recur

again to the parallel case of the Revolution. What essential distinction can be drawn between the execution of the father and the deposition of the son? What constitutional maxim is there which applies to  
 5 the former and not to the latter? The king can do no wrong. If so, James was as innocent as Charles could have been. The minister only ought to be responsible for the acts of the sovereign. If so, why not impeach Jeffreys\* and retain James? The per-  
 10 son of a king is sacred. Was the person of James considered sacred at the Boyne?† To discharge cannon against an army in which a king is known to to be posted, is to approach pretty near to regicide. Charles too, it should always be remembered, was put  
 15 to death by men who had been exasperated by the hostilities of several years, and who never had been bound to him by any other tie than that which was common to them with all their fellow-citizens. Those who drove James from his throne, who seduced his  
 20 army, who alienated his friends, who first imprisoned him in his palace, and then turned him out of it, who broke in upon his various slumbers by imperious messages, who pursued him with fire and sword from one part of the empire to another, who hanged, drew,  
 25 and quartered his adherents, and attainted his inno-

\* *Jeffreys*—chief justice in the reigns of Charles II. and James II., was noted for his brutal demeanour on the judgment-seat. He presided at what was called the "Bloody Assizes," and condemned 320 persons to death.

† *Boyne*—a battle fought in 1690, in Ireland, between William III. and the exiled James II. assisted by the French.



cent heir, were his nephew and his two daughters !\* When we reflect on all these things, we are at a loss to conceive how the same persons who, on the fifth of November,† thank God for wonderfully conducting His servant, King William, and for making all 5 opposition fall before him until he became our king and governor, can, on the thirtieth of January,‡ contrive to be afraid that the blood of the royal martyr may be visited on themselves and their children.

10

We disapprove, we repeat, of the execution of Charles ; not because the constitution exempts the king from responsibility, for we know that all such maxims, however excellent, have their exceptions ; nor because we feel any peculiar interest in his 15 character, for we think that his sentence describes him with perfect justice as ‘a tyrant, a traitor, a murderer, and a public enemy’ ; but because we are convinced that the measure was most injurious to the cause of freedom. He whom it removed was a 20 captive and a hostage : his heir, to whom the allegiance of every royalist was instantly transferred, was at large. The Presbyterians could never have been

\* *His innocent heir*—the first pretender (claiming to be James III.), who led the Rebellion of 1715 ; *his nephew*—William, whose mother, Mary, was a sister of James II. ; *his two daughters*—Mary II., wife and full cousin of William, and Anne, queen after William’s death.

† *Fifth of November*—the day of William’s landing at Torbay, in Devon, 1688.

‡ *Thirtieth of January*—the day of the execution of Charles, 1649.

perfectly reconciled to the father ; they had no such rooted enmity to the son. The great body of the people, also, contemplated that proceeding with feelings which, however unreasonable, no government  
5 could safely venture to outrage.

But, though we think the conduct of the regicides blameable, that of Milton appears to us in a very different light. The deed was done. It could not be undone. The evil was incurred ; and the object  
10 was to render it as small as possible. We censure the chiefs of the army for not yielding to the popular opinion ; but we cannot censure Milton for wishing to change that opinion. The very feeling which would have restrained us from committing the act, would  
15 have led us, after it had been committed, to defend it against the raving of servility and superstition. For the sake of public liberty, we wish that the thing had not been done, while the people disapproved of it. But, for the sake of public liberty, we should also have  
20 wished the people to approve of it when it was done. If anything more were wanting to the justification of Milton, the book of Salmasius\* would furnish it. That miserable performance is now with justice considered only as a beacon to word-catchers who wish  
25 to become statesmen. The celebrity of the man who

\* *Salmasius*—a French scholar, who was deputed by Charles II. to write a defence of his father, Charles I. (*Defensio Regis*) ; Milton was selected by the Commonwealth leaders to answer this book, which he did in his *Defensio Populi*, a defence of the conduct of the people of England.

refuted it, the '*Æneæ magni dextra*,'\* gives it all its fame with the present generation. In that age the state of things was different. It was not then fully understood how vast an interval separates the mere classical scholar from the political philosopher. Nor 5 can it be doubted, that a treatise which, bearing the name of so eminent a critic, attacked the fundamental principles of all free governments, must, if suffered to remain unanswered, have produced a most pernicious effect on the public mind. 10

We wish to add a few words relative to another subject on which the enemies of Milton delight to dwell—his conduct during the administration of the Protector. That an enthusiastic votary of liberty should accept office under a military usurper, seems, 15 no doubt, at first sight, extraordinary. But all the circumstances in which the country was then placed were extraordinary. The ambition of Oliver was of no vulgar kind. He never seems to have coveted despotic power. He at first fought sincerely and 20 manfully for the parliament, and never deserted it, till it had deserted its duty. If he dissolved it by force, it was not till he found that the few members who remained after so many deaths, secessions, and expulsions, were desirous to appropriate to them- 25 selves a power which they held only in trust, and to inflict upon England the curse of a Venetian

\* *Æneæ magni dextra* [*cadis*].—Thou fallest by the right hand of the great Æneas (Virgil's '*Æneid*,' x. 830).

oligarchy.\* But even when thus placed by violence at the head of affairs, he did not assume unlimited power. He gave the country a constitution far more perfect than any which had at that time been known  
 5 in the world. He reformed the representative system in a manner that has extorted praise even from Lord Clarendon. For himself he demanded indeed the first place in the commonwealth; but with powers scarcely so great as those of a Dutch stadtholder,† or  
 10 an American President. He gave the Parliament a voice in the appointment of ministers, and left to it the whole legislative authority—not even reserving to himself a veto on its enactments. And he did not require that the chief magistracy should be hereditary  
 15 in his family. Thus far, we think, if the circumstances of the time, and the opportunities which he had of aggrandising himself, be fairly considered, he will not lose by comparison with Washington or Bolivar.‡ Had his moderation been met by correspond-  
 20 ing moderation, there is no reason to think that he would have overstepped the line which he had traced for himself. But when he found that his Parliaments

\* *Oligarchy*. A form of government which places the supreme power in the hands of a small number—a close aristocracy. The Government of Venice, up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, was a typical example.

† *Stadtholder*. The old name for the chief magistrate of Holland.

‡ *Washington* (1732-1799)—the first President of the United States of America; *Bolivar* (1783-1842)—called the Washington of South America, in virtue of his rescuing it from the Spanish yoke.

questioned the authority under which they met, and that he was in danger of being deprived of the restricted power which was absolutely necessary to his personal safety, then, it must be acknowledged, he adopted a more arbitrary policy. 5

Yet, though we believe that the intentions of Cromwell were at first honest; though we believe that he was driven from the noble course which he had marked out for himself, by the almost irresistible force of circumstances; though we admire, in common with 10 all men of all parties, the ability and energy of his splendid administration, we are not pleading for arbitrary and lawless power, even in his hands. We know that a good constitution is infinitely better than the best despot. But we suspect, that at the time of 15 which we speak, the violence of religious and political enmities rendered a stable and happy settlement next to impossible. The choice lay, not between Cromwell and liberty, but between Cromwell and the Stuarts. That Milton chose well, no man can doubt 20 who fairly compares the events of the Protectorate with those of the thirty years which succeeded it—the darkest and most disgraceful in the English annals. Cromwell was evidently laying, though in an irregular manner, the foundations of an admirable system. 25 Never before had religious liberty and freedom of discussion been enjoyed in a greater degree. Never had the national honour been better upheld abroad, or the seat of justice better filled at home. And it

was rarely that any opposition, which stopped short of open rebellion, provoked the resentment of the liberal and magnanimous usurper. The institutions which he had established, as set down in the Instrument of  
 5 Government, and the Humble Petition and Advice, were excellent. His practice, it is true, too often departed from the theory of these institutions. But, had he lived a few years longer, it is probable that his institutions would have survived him, and that his  
 10 arbitrary practice would have died with him. His power had not been consecrated by ancient prejudices. It was upheld only by his great personal qualities. Little, therefore, was to be dreaded from a second protector, unless he were also a second Oliver  
 15 Cromwell. The events which followed his decease are the most complete vindication of those who exerted themselves to uphold his authority. For his death dissolved the whole frame of society. The army rose against the Parliament, the different corps  
 20 of the army against each other. Sect raved against sect. Party plotted against party. The Presbyterians, in their eagerness to be revenged on the Independents, sacrificed their own liberty, and deserted all their old principles. Without casting one  
 25 glance on the past, or requiring one stipulation for the future, they threw down their freedom at the feet of the most frivolous and heartless of tyrants.

Then came those days, never to be recalled without a blush—the days of servitude without loyalty, and

sensuality without love, of dwarfish talents and gigantic vices, the paradise of cold hearts and narrow minds, the golden age of the coward, the bigot, and the slave. The king cringed to his rival that he might trample on his people, sunk into a viceroy of France, 5 and pocketed, with complacent infamy, her degrading insults and her more degrading gold. The caresses of harlots, and the jests of buffoons, regulated the measures of a government which had just ability enough to deceive, and just religion enough to perse- 10 cute. The principles of liberty were the scoff of every grinning courtier, and the *Anathēma Maranātha*\* of every fawning dean. In every high place, worship was paid to Charles and James—Belial† and Mo- 15 loch;‡ and England propitiated those obscene and cruel idols, with the blood of her best and bravest children. Crime succeeded to crime, and disgrace to disgrace, till the race, accursed of God and man, was a second time driven forth, to wander on the face of the earth, and to be a by-word and a shaking of the 20 head to the nations.

Most of the remarks which we have hitherto made on the public character of Milton, apply to him only

\* *Anathēma Maranātha*—Anathema, is Greek for curse; Maranatha, Syriac for 'our Lord cometh'. The whole is a form of denunciation. Cf. 1 Corinthians xvi. 22.

† *Belial* (Heb.)—the worthless or lawless one, *i.e.*, the Devil.

‡ *Moloch*—the god of the Ammonites, to whom, in sacrifice, children were made to pass through the fire. Now-a-days, the word is used to designate any influence that demands from us the sacrifice of what we hold most dear.

as one of a large body. We shall proceed to notice some of the peculiarities which distinguished him from his contemporaries. And, for that purpose, it is necessary to take a short survey of the parties into  
 5 which the political world was at that time divided. We must premise, that our observations are intended to apply only to those who adhered, from a sincere preference, to one or to the other side. At a period of public commotion, every faction, like an Oriental  
 10 army, is attended by a crowd of camp-followers, a useless and heartless rabble, who prowl round its line of march in the hope of picking up something under its protection, but desert it in the day of battle, and often join to exterminate it after a defeat. England,  
 15 at the time of which we are treating, abounded with such fickle and selfish politicians, who transferred their support to every government as it rose; who kissed the hand of the king in 1640, and spat in his face in 1649; who shouted with equal glee when  
 20 Cromwell was inaugurated in Westminster Hall, and when he was dug up to be hanged at Tyburn; who dined on calves' heads or on broiled rumps, and cut down oak-branches or stuck them up, as circumstances altered, without the slightest shame or repugnance.  
 25 These we leave out of the account. We take our estimate of parties from those who really deserved to be called partisans.

We would speak first of the Puritans, the most remarkable body of men, perhaps, which the world has



ever produced. The odious and ridiculous parts of their character lie on the surface. He that runs may read them; nor have there been wanting attentive and malicious observers to point them out. For many years after the Restoration, they were the theme of 5 unmeasured invective and derision. They were exposed to the utmost licentiousness of the press and the stage, at the time when the press and stage were most licentious. They were not men of letters; they were as a body unpopular; they could not defend 10 themselves; and the public would not take them under its protection. They were therefore abandoned, without reserve, to the tender mercies of the satirists and dramatists. The ostentatious simplicity of their dress, their sour aspect, their nasal twang, 15 their stiff posture, their long graces, their Hebrew names, the scriptural phrases which they introduced on every occasion, their contempt of human learning, their detestation of polite amusements, were indeed fair game for the laughers. But it is not from the 20 laughers alone that the philosophy of history is to be learned. And he who approaches this subject should carefully guard against the influence of that potent ridicule which has already misled so many excellent writers.

25

Those who roused the people to resistance—who directed their measures through a long series of eventful years—who formed, out of the most unpromising materials, the finest army that Europe had ever seen—

who trampled down King, Church, and Aristocracy—who, in the short intervals of domestic sedition and rebellion, made the name of England terrible to every nation on the face of the earth, were no vulgar fanatics. Most of their absurdities were mere external badges, like the signs of free-masonry, or the dresses of friars. We regret that these badges were not more attractive. We regret that a body, to whose courage and talents mankind has owed inestimable obligations, had not the lofty elegance which distinguished some of the adherents of Charles I., or the easy good-breeding for which the court of Charles II. was celebrated. But, if we must make our choice, we shall, like Bassanio\* in the play, turn from the specious caskets, which contain only the death's head and the fool's head, and fix our choice on the plain leaden chest which conceals the treasure.

The Puritans were men whose minds had derived a peculiar character from the daily contemplation of superior beings and eternal interests. Not content with acknowledging, in general terms, an over-ruling Providence, they habitually ascribed every event to the Will of the Great Being, for whose power nothing

\* *Bassanio*—in Shakespeare's 'Merchant of Venice,' is one of the suitors for Portia's hand. In obedience to her father's will, there are displayed three caskets (gold, silver, and lead), one of which contains the lady's portrait, and whoever chooses this is to be the fortunate possessor of Portia. The Prince of Morocco and the Prince of Arragon, deceived by the specious exterior, choose the gold and the silver casket respectively, and find nothing therein but a death's head and a fool's head. Bassanio selects "the plain leaden chest which conceals the treasure".

was too vast, for whose inspection nothing was too minute. To know Him, to serve Him, to enjoy Him, was with them the great end of existence. They rejected with contempt the ceremonious homage which other sects substituted for the pure worship of 5 the soul. Instead of catching occasional glimpses of the Deity through an obscuring vale, they aspired to gaze full on the intolerable brightness, and to commune with Him face to face. Hence originated their contempt for terrestrial distinctions. [The difference 10 between the greatest and meanest of mankind seemed to vanish, when compared with the boundless interval which separated the whole race from Him on whom their own eyes were constantly fixed.] They recognised no title to superiority but His favour; and, confident 15 of that favour, they despised all the accomplishments and all the dignities of the world. If they were unacquainted with the works of philosophers and poets, they were deeply read in the oracles of God. If their names were not found in the registers of heralds, they 20 felt assured that they were recorded in the Book of Life. If their steps were not accompanied by a splendid train of menials, legions of ministering angels had charge over them. Their palaces were houses not made with hands; their diadems, crowns 25 of glory which shall never fade away! On the rich and the eloquent, on nobles and priests, they looked down with contempt: for they esteemed themselves rich in a more precious treasure, and eloquent in a

more sublime language, nobles by the right of an earlier creation, and priests by the imposition of a mightier hand. The very meanest of them was a being to whose fate a mysterious and terrible import-  
 5ance belonged—on whose slightest action the spirits of light and darkness looked with anxious interest, who had been destined, before heaven and earth were created, to enjoy a felicity which should continue when heaven and earth should have passed away.

10 Events which short-sighted politicians ascribed to earthly causes had been ordained on his account. For his sake empires had risen, and flourished, and decayed. For his sake the Almighty had proclaimed His will by the pen of the evangelist, and the harp of  
 15 the prophet. He had been wrested by no common deliverer from the grasp of no common foe. He had been ransomed by the fate of no vulgar agony, by the blood of no earthly sacrifice. It was for him that the sun had been darkened, that the rocks had been rent,  
 20 that the dead had arisen, that all nature had shuddered at the sufferings of her expiring God!

Thus the Puritan was made up of two different men, the one all self-abasement, penitence, gratitude, passions; the other proud, calm, inflexible, sagacious.

25 He prostrated himself in the dust before his Maker; but he set his foot on the neck of his king. In his devotional retirement, he prayed with convulsions, and groans, and tears. He was half-maddened by glorious or terrible illusions. He heard the lyres of angels, or

the tempting whispers of fiends. He caught a gleam of the beatific vision, or woke screaming from dreams of everlasting fire. Like Vane,\* he thought himself intrusted with the sceptre of the millennial year.† Like Fleetwood,‡ he cried in the bitterness of his soul 5 that God had hid His face from him. But when he took his seat in the council, or girt on his sword for war, these tempestuous workings of the soul had left no perceptible trace behind them. People who saw nothing of the godly but their uncouth visages, and 10 heard nothing from them but their groans and their whining hymns, might laugh at them. But those had little reason to laugh who encountered them in the hall of debate, or in the field of battle. These fanatics brought to civil and military affairs, a coolness of judg- 15 ment, and an immutability of purpose, which some writers have thought inconsistent with their religious zeal, but which were in fact the necessary effects of it. The intensity of their feelings on one subject made them tranquil on every other. One overpowering 20 sentiment had subjected to itself pity and hatred, ambition and fear. Death had lost its terrors, and

\* *Vane*, Sir Henry,—a prominent politician on the Parliamentary side during the Civil war. He was one of the “Fifth Monarchy Men,” and much given to extravagant religious speculations.

† *Millennial Year*—millennium means simply a thousand years, and designates a certain period in the history of the world, lasting for an indefinite space (vaguely 1000 years), during which the Kingdom of the Messiah will be visibly established on the earth.

‡ *Fleetwood*,—a General in the Parliamentary forces, and son-in-law of Oliver Cromwell.

pleasure its charms. They had their smiles and their tears, their raptures and their sorrows, but not for the things of this world. Enthusiasm had made them Stoics,\* had cleared their minds from every vulgar  
 5 passion and prejudice, and raised them above the influence of danger and corruption. It sometimes might lead them to pursue unwise ends, but never to choose unwise means. They went through the world like Sir Artegal's iron man Talus† with his  
 10 flail, crushing and trampling down oppressors, mingling with human beings, but having neither part nor lot in human infirmities; insensible to fatigue, to pleasure, and to pain; not to be pierced by any weapon, not to be withstood by any barrier.

15 Such we believe to have been the character of the Puritans. We perceive the absurdity of their manners. We dislike the sullen gloom of their domestic habits. We acknowledge that the tone of their minds was often injured by straining after things too high  
 20 for mortal reach: and we know that, in spite of their hatred of Popery, they too often fell into the worst vices of that bad system, intolerance and extravagant austerity, that they had their anchorites‡ and their

\* *Stoics*—(See note, p. 34). Some of their tenets were that a man ought to be free from all passions, to be unmoved either by joy or grief, and to esteem all things governed by unavoidable necessity.

† *Talus*. Spenser in his 'Faërie Queene,' makes Talus run continually round the island of Crete, chastening offenders with an iron flail. Sir Artegal is the hero of the 5th Book of the F. Q., and impersonates Justice.

‡ *Anchorite*,—Greek, meaning one who retires from the world—a hermit.

crusades,\* their Dunstans,† and their De Montforts,‡ their Dominics,§ and their Escobars. || Yet, when all circumstances are taken into consideration, we do not hesitate to pronounce them a brave, a wise, an honest, and a useful body. 5

The Puritans espoused the cause of civil liberty mainly because it was the cause of religion. There was another party, by no means numerous, but distinguished by learning and ability, which co-operated with them on very different principles. We speak of 10

\* *Crusades*,—the name given to the religious wars carried on, in the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries, between the Christian nations of Europe and the Mahomedans of the East. The object of conflict was to wrest the Holy Land from the Saracens. The word is derived from *crux* meaning cross—the symbol of the Christian religion.

† *Dunstan*, St., a celebrated ecclesiastic in England (Archbishop of Canterbury) in the 10th century. Macaulay takes him as a type of the intolerant and austere mind. The chief purpose of his life was to subjugate the Anglo-Saxon Church to that of Rome, to extend and multiply ecclesiastical interests, and to enforce celibacy on all the clergy. He introduced a new order of monks (Benedictines) into Britain, with additional strictness of discipline.

‡ *De Montfort*,—(1150-1226) not the De Montfort of English History, the founder of our Parliamentary Representation, but his father a French nobleman, who in the 12th century was notorious for his terrible religious crusade against the Albigenses. These were a set of "heretics" in the South of France, who wished to renounce the authority of the Popes and the Romish Church.

§ *Dominic*,—(1170-1221), the founder of the Dominican or Black Friars. He was associated with De Montfort in his barbarous cruelties towards the Albigenses.

|| *Escobar*,—(1589-1669). A Spanish Jesuit, famous as a writer on the subject of Casuistry (*i.e.*, the branch of Theology and Morals which deals with delicate questions of Conscience, Duty, and Justice). He was also noted for the austerity of his life, and the strictness with which he adhered to the rules of his order, and this is the aspect Macaulay has in view.

those whom Cromwell was accustomed to call the heathens, men who were, in the phraseology of that time, doubting Thomases \* or careless Gallios † with regard to religious subjects, but passionate worshippers of freedom. Heated by the study of ancient literature, they set up their country as their idol, and proposed to themselves the heroes of Plutarch ‡ as their examples. They seem to have borne some resemblance to the Brissotins § of the French Revolution. But it is not very easy to draw the line of distinction between them and their devout associates, whose tone and manner they sometimes found it convenient to affect, and sometimes, it is probable, imperceptibly adopted.

We now come to the Royalists. We shall attempt to speak of them, as we have spoken of their antagonists, with perfect candour. We shall not charge upon a whole party the profligacy and baseness of the horse-boys, gamblers, and bravoës, whom the hope of license and plunder attracted from all the dens of Whitefriars || to the standard of Charles, and who disgraced their

\* *Thomas*—John xx. 24.

† *Gallio*—Gallio “cared for none of those things,” Acts xviii. 17.

‡ *Plutarch*—author of ‘Parallel Lives of Forty-six Greeks and Romans,’ arranged in pairs, a Greek and a Roman together. His heroes were Theseus and Romulus, Lycurgus and Numa, Alexander and Cæsar, Demosthenes and Cicero, &c.

§ *Brissotins*—a nickname given to the advocates of reform in the French Revolution, because they were led by Jean Pierre Brissot. The party was subsequently named Girondists.

|| *Whitefriars*—a part of London, so-called from a Monastery of White Friars which formerly stood in Water Lane.



associates by excesses which, under the stricter discipline of the Parliamentary armies, were never tolerated. We will select a more favourable specimen. Thinking, as we do, that the cause of the king was the cause of bigotry and tyranny, we yet cannot refrain 5 from looking with complacency on the character of the honest old Cavaliers. We feel a national pride in comparing them with the instruments which the despots of other countries are compelled to employ, with the mutes, who throng their ante-chambers, and the Janis- 10 saries \* who mount guard at their gates. Our royalist countrymen were not heartless, dangling courtiers, bowing at every step, and simpering at every word. They were not mere machines for destruction dressed up in uniforms, caned into skill, intoxicated into valour, 15 defending without love, destroying without hatred. There was a freedom in their subserviency, a nobleness in their very degradation. The sentiment of individual independence was strong within them. They were indeed misled, but by no base or selfish motive. Com- 20 passion and romantic honour, the prejudices of childhood, and the venerable names of history, threw over them a spell potent as that of Duessa ; † and like the Red-Cross Knight, they thought that they were doing battle for an injured beauty, while they defended a 25

\* *Janissaries*—the militia of the Turkish Empire. The word is a corruption of *Yengi-tscheri*—new corps.

† *Duessa*—in Spenser's 'Faërie Queene' (Book I. 2-7) a foul witch, who assumes the disguise of Una, a distressed and lovely woman, to beguile her champion, the Red Cross knight, into the Palace of Pride.

false and loathsome sorceress. In truth, they scarcely entered at all into the merits of the political question. It was not for a treacherous king or an intolerant church that they fought; but for the old banner which  
 5 had waved in so many battles over the heads of their fathers, and for the altars at which they had received the hands of their brides. Though nothing could be more erroneous than their political opinions, they possessed, in a far greater degree than their adversaries,  
 10 those qualities which are the grace of private life. With many of the vices of the Round Table \* they had also many of its virtues—courtesy, generosity, veracity, tenderness and respect for women. They had far more both of profound and polite learning than the  
 15 Puritans. Their manners were more engaging, their tempers more amiable, their tastes more elegant, and their households more cheerful.

Milton did not strictly belong to any of the classes which we have described. He was not a Puritan.  
 20 He was not a free-thinker. He was not a Cavalier. In his character the noblest qualities of every party were combined in harmonious union. From the Parliament and from the court, from the conventicle and  
 from the Gothic cloister, † from the gloomy and sepul-

\* *Round Table*—the legendary table of King Arthur and his knights.

† *Gothic cloister*,—stands here for a monastery or abbey—by a figure of Contiguity. The cloister was an arcade round the open courts of monasteries and large churches. Gothic architecture was neither originated nor influenced by the Goths. The term was applied in contempt to the architecture of the middle ages, by the architects of the Renaissance or 16th century. To them it was clumsy, and fit only for Goths or Barbarians.

chral circles of the Roundheads, and from the Christmas revel of the hospitable Cavalier, his nature selected and drew to itself whatever was great and good, while it rejected all the base and pernicious ingredients by which those finer elements were defiled. | Like the 5 Puritans, he lived

‘As ever in his great Task-master’s eye.’\*

Like them, he kept his mind continually fixed on an Almighty Judge and an eternal reward. And hence he acquired their contempt of external circumstances, 10 their fortitude, their tranquillity, their inflexible resolution. | But not the coolest sceptic or the most profane scoffer was more perfectly free from the contagion of their frantic delusions, their savage manners, their ludicrous jargon, their scorn of science, and their aver- 15 sion to pleasure. | Hating tyranny with a perfect hatred, *In am.* he had nevertheless all the estimable and ornamental qualities which were almost entirely monopolised by the party of the tyrant. [There was none who had a stronger sense of the value of literature, a finer relish 20 for every elegant amusement, or a more chivalrous delicacy of honour and love. [Though his opinions were democratic, his tastes and his associations were such as harmonise best with monarchy and aristocracy.] He was under the influence of all the feelings by which 25 the gallant Cavaliers were misled. But of those feel-

\* “All is, if I have grace to use it so,  
As ever in my great taskmaster’s eye.”

—Milton’s Sonnet on his 23rd Birthday.

ings he was the master and not the slave. Like the hero of Homer,\* he enjoyed all the pleasures of fascination ; but he was not fascinated. He listened to the song of the Syrens ; but he glided by without being  
 5 seduced to their fatal shore. He tasted the cup of Circe ; † but he bore about him a sure antidote against the effects of its bewitching sweetness. The illusions which captivated his imagination never impaired his reasoning powers. The statesman was proof against  
 10 the splendour, the solemnity, and the romance which enchanted the poet. Any person who will contrast *Tram* the sentiments expressed in his Treatises on Prelacy, with the exquisite lines on ecclesiastical architecture and music in the *Penseroso*, ‡ which was published

\* *The hero of Homer.* Ulysses, one of the heroes of the Trojan war, and the hero of Homer's 'Odyssey'. The Sirens were maidens who sat on a promontory on the coast of Italy and sang, with bewitching sweetness, songs that allured the passing sailor to draw near only to meet with destruction. Ulysses, on the advice of Circe, stuffed the ears of his companions with wax and lashed himself to a mast, until he had sailed out of hearing of the fatal songs.

† *Circe.* A fabulous sorceress, who by her drugs changed human beings into wolves and lions. She changed twenty-two of Ulysses' companions into swine, but the hero himself having obtained from Mercury the herb Moly ("the antidote against its bewitching sweetness"), went boldly to her palace and remained uninjured by her cup.

‡ The exquisite lines are :—

" But let my due feet never fail  
 To walk the studious cloister's pale,  
 And love the high-embowed roof,  
 With antique pillars massy proof,  
 And storied windows richly dight,  
 Casting a dim religious light.  
 There let the pealing organ blow,  
 To the full-voiced choir below,

about the same time, will understand our meaning. This is an inconsistency which, more than anything else, raises his character in our estimation; because it shews how many private tastes and feelings he sacrificed, in order to do what he considered his duty to 5 mankind. It is the very struggle of the noble Othello.\* His heart relents; but his hand is firm. He does nought in hate, but all in honour. He kisses the beautiful deceiver before he destroys her.

That from which the public character of Milton 10 derives its great and peculiar splendour still remains to be mentioned. If he exerted himself to overthrow a forsworn king and a persecuting hierarchy, he exerted himself in conjunction with others. But the glory of the battle which he fought for that species of freedom 15 which is the most valuable, and which was then the least understood—the freedom of the human mind—is all his own. Thousands and tens of thousands among his contemporaries raised their voices against ship-money and the Star-chamber. But there were 20 few indeed who discerned the more fearful evils of moral and intellectual slavery, and the benefits which

In service high and anthems clear,  
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,  
Dissolve me into ecstasies,  
And bring all Heaven before mine eyes."

\* *Othello*,—the hero of Shakespeare's play of that name. Iago works upon his jealousy till he believes his wife Desdemona false to him. Thereafter, much as he loves her, he thinks his honour demands it, and he murders her.

would result from the liberty of the press,\* and the unfettered exercise of private judgment. These were the objects which Milton justly conceived to be the most important. He was desirous that the people  
 5 should think for themselves as well as tax themselves, and be emancipated from the dominion of prejudice as well as from that of Charles. He knew that those who, with the best intentions, overlooked these schemes of reform, and contented themselves with pulling down  
 10 the king and imprisoning the malignants, acted like the heedless brothers in his own poem, who, in their eagerness to disperse the train of the sorcerer, neglected the means of liberating the captive. They thought only of conquering when they should have thought of disen-  
 15 chanting.

‘Oh, ye mistook ! Ye should have snatched the wand !  
                     Without the rod reversed,  
     And backward mutters of dis severing power,  
     We cannot free the lady that sits here  
 20     Bound in strong fetters fixed and motionless.’

—*Comus*, 815-819.

To reverse the rod, to spell the charm backward, to break the ties which bound a stupefied people to the seat of enchantment, was the noble aim of Milton.  
 25 To this all his public conduct was directed. For this he joined the Presbyterians—for this he forsook them. He fought their perilous battle ; but he turned away with disdain from their insolent triumph. He saw

\* See Memoir of Milton, p. xviii.

that they, like those whom they had vanquished, were hostile to the liberty of thought. He therefore joined the Independents, and called upon Cromwell to break the secular chain, and to save free conscience from the paw of the Presbyterian wolf.\* With a view to the same great object, he attacked the licensing system,† in that sublime treatise which every statesman should wear as a sign upon his hand, and as frontlets between his eyes. His attacks were, in general, directed less against particular abuses, than against those deeply seated errors on which almost all abuses are founded, the servile worship of eminent men, and the irrational dread of innovation.

That he might shake the foundations of these debasing sentiments more effectually, he always selected for himself the boldest literary services. He never came up in the rear when the outworks had been carried, and the breach entered. He pressed into the forlorn-hope. At the beginning of the changes, he wrote with incomparable energy and eloquence against the bishops. But, when his opinion seemed likely to prevail, he passed on to other subjects, and abandoned prelacy to the crowd of writers who now hastened to insult a falling party. There is no more hazardous

\* *Presbyterian wolf*,—

Help us to save free conscience from the paw,  
Of hireling wolves whose gospel is their maw.

—Milton's *Sonnet to Cromwell*.

† *Licensing System*,—Milton wrote his *Areopagitica* in favour of the Liberty of the Press. (See p. 89, as well as *Memoir of Milton*, p. xviii.)

enterprise than that of bearing the torch of truth into those dark and infected recesses in which no light has ever shone. But it was the choice and the pleasure of Milton to penetrate the noisome vapours, and to  
 5 brave the terrible explosion. Those who most disapprove of his opinions, must respect the hardihood with which he maintained them. He, in general, left to others the credit of expounding and defending the popular parts of his religious and political creed. He  
 10 took his own stand upon those which the great body of his countrymen reprobated as criminal, or derided as paradoxical. He stood up for divorce and regicide. He ridiculed the *Eikon*.<sup>\*</sup> He attacked the prevailing systems of education. His radiant and bene-  
 15 ficient career resembled that of the god of light† and fertility :

Nitor in adversum : nec me, qui cætera, vincit  
 Impetus, et rapido contrarius evehor orbi.

It is to be regretted that the prose writings of Milton  
 20 should, in our time, be so little read. As compositions, they deserve the attention of every man who wishes to become acquainted with the full power of

<sup>\*</sup> *Eikon* (Eikon Basilike—Portraiture of the King), a book attributed to Charles I., and giving an account of his Majesty's sufferings. In answer to this book, Milton wrote his 'Iconoclast,' or 'Image Breaker'. See p. 89.

† *God of light*,—Phœbus in his address to Phæton when the latter desired to drive the chariot of the Sun. 'I have to contend against opposing circumstances ; the force which overcomes all other things does not overcome me, and I am borne in a contrary direction to the swiftly moving world.' (Ovid's 'Metamorphoses,' II., 72, 73.)



the English language. They abound with passages, compared with which the finest declamations of Burke\* sink into insignificance. They are a perfect field of cloth of gold. The style is stiff with gorgeous embroidery. Not even in the earlier books of the 5 *Paradise Lost* has he ever risen higher than in those parts of his controversial works in which his feelings, excited by conflict, find a vent in bursts of devotional and lyric rapture. It is, to borrow his own majestic language, 'a sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harp- 10 ing symphonies'. (*The Reason of Church Government urged against Prelatcy.*† Book ii.)

We had intended to look more closely at these performances, to analyse the peculiarities of the diction, to dwell at some length on the sublime wisdom of the 15 *Areopagitica*, and the nervous rhetoric of the *Iconoclast*, and to point out some of those magnificent passages which occur in the *Treatise of Reformation*,† and the *Animadversions on the Remonstrant*.† But the length to which our remarks have already extended 20 renders this impossible.

We must conclude. And yet we can scarcely tear ourselves away from the subject. The days immediately following the publication of this relic of Milton, appear to be peculiarly set apart and consecrated to 25 his memory. And we shall scarcely be censured

\* *Burke*, Edmund,—(1729-1797). Famous as orator and political writer.

† Three of Milton's five anti-episcopal pamphlets written in 1641, urging a root and branch abolition of Episcopacy.

if, on this his festival, we be found lingering near his shrine, how worthless soever may be the offering which we bring to it. While this book lies on our table, we seem to be contemporaries of the great poet.

5 We are transported a hundred and fifty years back. We can almost fancy that we are visiting him in his small lodging ; that we see him sitting at the old organ beneath the faded green hangings ; that we can catch the quick twinkle of his eyes, rolling in vain to find

10 the day ; that we are reading in the lines of his noble countenance the proud and mournful history of his glory and his affliction ! We image to ourselves the breathless silence in which we should listen to his slightest word ; the passionate veneration with which

15 we should kneel to kiss his hand and weep upon it ; the earnestness with which we should endeavour to console him, if indeed such a spirit could need consolation, for the neglect of an age unworthy of his talents and his virtues ; the eagerness with which we

20 should contest with his daughters, or with his Quaker friend Ellwood,\* the privilege of reading Homer to him, or of taking down the immortal accents which flowed from his lips.

\* *Ellwood*, Thomas,—a Quaker who obtained the liberty of coming to Milton's house, "when I would read to him what books he should appoint me, which was all the favour I desired". It was to Ellwood that Milton in 1665 showed the manuscript of 'Paradise Lost,' and bade him take it home with him and read it at his leisure. On returning it, the quaker made his famous speech, "Thou hast said much here of 'Paradise Lost,' but what hast thou to say of Paradise found?" Milton afterwards told Ellwood that to this casual question was due his writing 'Paradise Regained'.

These are perhaps foolish feelings. Yet we cannot be ashamed of them; nor shall we be sorry if what we have written shall in any degree excite them in other minds. We are not much in the habit of idolising either the living or the dead. And we think 5 that there is no more certain indication of a weak and ill-regulated intellect than that propensity which, for want of a better name, we will venture to christen *Boswellism*.\* But *there are* a few characters which have stood the closest scrutiny and the severest tests, 10 which have been tried in the furnace and have proved pure, which have been weighed in the balance and have not been found wanting, which have been declared sterling by the general consent of mankind, and which are visibly stamped with the image and super- 15 scription of the Most High. These great men we trust that we know how to prize; and of these was Milton. The sight of his books, the sound of his name, are refreshing to us. His thoughts resemble those celestial fruits and flowers which the Virgin 20 Martyr† of Massinger sent down from the gardens of Paradise to the earth, distinguished from the productions of other soils, not only by their superior bloom and sweetness, but by their miraculous efficacy to invigorate and to heal. They are powerful, not only 25

\* *Boswellism*,—from James Boswell, the author of the ‘Life of Samuel Johnson’. Boswell worshipped his hero to the verge of weakness.

† *Virgin Martyr*,—a play of Philip Massinger (1554-1640), one of the Elizabethan dramatists.

to delight, but to elevate and purify. Nor do we envy the man who can study either the life or the writings of the great Poet and Patriot, without aspiring to emulate, not indeed the sublime works with which  
5 his genius has enriched our literature, but the zeal with which he laboured for the public good, the fortitude with which he endured every private calamity, the lofty disdain with which he looked down on temptation and dangers, the deadly hatred which he bore to  
10 bigots and tyrants, and the faith which he so sternly kept with his country and with his fame.

CRITICAL NOTES.



## CRITICAL NOTES.



IN these notes, two objects are kept prominent. One is, to illustrate the Principles of Rhetoric, by exemplifying the various Figures of Speech, the laws of the Order of Words, of the Sentence and the Paragraph, and of Expository Method generally. The other is, to point out and emphasize Macaulay's characteristics both in style and in thought. In both aspects there is, naturally, considerable repetition; but, to most pupils, repetition is a necessity, and to few a disadvantage.

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### PAGE I.

*Line 1.*—The opening sentence is a good example of one of Macaulay's characteristics. It is a statement apparently quite foreign to the theme of the essay. We expect some account of Milton's early days; or some explanation of the author's motive in choosing such a subject, but instead of that, we get a vague general affirmation as to the discovery of a Latin Manuscript. We shall gradually see the bearing of this as we go on, but meantime it

suffices to excite our curiosity ; our interest is aroused, and we are anxious to push on to further explanations. Macaulay never loses an opportunity of thus quickening the attention ; and this method is one of his favourite devices, applied alike in sentences, in paragraphs, and, as here, in whole discourses. Moreover, the sentence itself, as a sentence, is a fair example of the same principle ; it is *periodic*, and the emphatic point is kept till the end.

- l. 4.—Mark the Inversion ‘with it,’ to link the two sentences more closely.

## P. 2.

- l. 10.—There is not much time wasted over preliminaries. The closing sentence of this first paragraph brings us to ‘the great poet,’ and with the assurance that we are really reaching the heart of our subject, we can still afford to linger a little over Mr. Sumner and his task. The one condition that must be satisfied regarding all such prefatory and introductory matter, is that it be brief ; and here the condition is fairly well attended to.

- l. 13.—A new paragraph,—because we have entered on a new topic—Mr. Sumner’s performance of his task. Note here a first touch of the *Balanced Structure*, which is so much a feature of Macaulay’s style generally, and of this earliest essay in particular—honourable *to his talent* and *to his character*. So too, in the next sentences ‘*easy or elegant*’ ; ‘*clearness and fidelity*,’ ‘*a sensible and candid man*’ ; ‘*firm in his own religious opinions and tolerant towards those of others*’.

The paragraph is a very simple one. Four sentences, —1. A general judgment, 2. A criticism of *the translation*, 3. Of *the notes*, 4. Of *the preface*. Most writers would have kept the general judgment for the last sentence.

- l. 23.—Again a new paragraph,—because now we have at last come to the merits of ‘the Book itself’. This is a good



case for *Parallel Construction*. We shall see how it is kept up.

l. 24.—This is a *loose* sentence with a ‘though’ clause dangling at the end. Much better to begin with ‘Though not exactly,’ &c., and end with ‘well written’. This makes the sentence more finished, and is in accordance with the principle that enjoins the placing of qualifying adjuncts before the words they qualify.

l. 26.—*There is*, &c. The Parallel Construction carried out in the last sentence is here slightly interrupted. We might say:—‘*It* shows no elaborate,’ &c. Mark here the epithets ‘elaborate,’ ‘scrupulous,’ ‘ceremonial,’ all in artificial balance; also the striking and original metaphor in ‘*academical Pharisees*’. Macaulay is fond of Biblical allusions, and Biblical phraseology. Here the metaphor is purely intellectual, to aid the understanding, and is sufficiently pat.

l. 29.—The variation from ‘the book,’ and ‘it,’ to ‘the author,’ is quite within the Parallel Construction rule. Here we have more metaphors,—but hackneyed, although quite good for an intellectual purpose. The epithet ‘Ciceronian’ is, in effect, a *Synecdoche*—*Antonomasia*,—Individual for the species—used as all such figures are, for the sake of the superior effect of the individual and concrete over the general and abstract. Macaulay is nothing if not concrete; he never loses an opportunity of illustrating his meaning, and impressing the reader by concrete allusions.

### P. 3.

l. 4.—*The nature of his subject*, again slightly at variance with Parallelism. We had in l. 29, ‘the author’; then in l. 2, ‘he’; we may still keep up the construction thus:—‘He was compelled by the nature of his subject, &c.’ The advantage of this is seen in l. 6.

- l. 6.—Here we have *Balance*, conjoined as it very often is in this essay, with *Antithesis* or *Contrast*; the contrast between ‘native’ and ‘foreigner’ is direct, between ‘carelessness’ and ‘ignorance’ secondary.
- l. 11.—A very happy *Epigram*; brought in at the end of a paragraph for effect. “Macaulay could not rest until the lines were level to a hair’s breadth, and the punctuation correct to a comma; until every paragraph concluded with a telling sentence and every sentence flowed like running water.” (Trevelyan’s *Life of Macaulay*, p. 505.)
- l. 14.—There is nothing to take note of here, but the prevalence of the Balanced Structure. ‘Emancipated from the influence of authority, and devoted to the search of truth.’ The last paragraph discussed *the style* of the treatise; this takes up *the matter*, in a meagre way; the next deals with *the heterodoxy*.

## P. 4.

- l. 1.—In the last sentence of this paragraph ‘observation,’ should be ‘observance’. This is a gross error of Impropropriety. ‘The former’ and ‘The latter,’ ll. 6 and 8, is an artificial and rather clumsy construction; not so objectionable in written, as in spoken, discourse because we can refer more readily to the first order—Arianism, Polygamy. It would be better just to repeat the nouns; indeed this is Macaulay’s most common way.
- l. 13.—His object being to interest, Macaulay begins to think that these preliminary remarks, naturally somewhat dull, are now long enough, and he wishes to launch out into wider topics. He has been doing his best to hasten through these subordinate facts,—even at the risk of being meagre and inadequate in his handling. Again we note the pervading Balances, none of which are particularly striking. ‘*Converted or perverted*’ is an *Alliteration* to

rouse the attention. Note the concrete details pervading this paragraph, 'quartos' (Synecdoche.—*species for genus*), 'dust and silence of the upper shelf' (*Condensed sentence*); 'a few minutes of chat in every drawing-room, and a few columns in every magazine' (*Balance*). Again we see the endeavour after a telling close to the paragraph, noted once before.

## P. 5.

- l. 7.—Now we see our way clearly. Up to this paragraph he has been but trifling with the subject; and at last he settles down to something more serious and substantial.

The first sentence is a sentence of *Explicit Reference*,—rare in Macaulay. He does not often take the reader into confidence and keep him informed as to his projected method of exposition. It is his usual habit to plunge us suddenly into a theme and leave us, after we have recovered from our surprise, to find out for ourselves our whereabouts.

- l. 9.—The next sentence illustrates this well. We are at once brought face to face with the Capuchins, without any attempt at introduction, and it is not till the next sentence, l. 13, that we see fully why they are mentioned. A scrupulously explicit writer would have said something like this:—'Just as the dexterous Capuchins,' &c. or 'On the same principle as the dexterous Capuchins,' &c. This is another of Macaulay's many prominent characteristics. He is very *abrupt*, jerking us from one subject to another without warning. Of course this is not altogether objectionable, if kept within bounds. It serves to keep the attention on the alert, and the discovery of the bearing imparts a glow of satisfaction to the mind.

- l. 12.—*A thread of his garment, a lock of his hair, or a drop of his blood.* This, besides Concreteness, illustrates Macaulay's *Climactic arrangement*. He loves to heap together

- a series of connected circumstances, rising in strength to the end. Here his order is good ; 1. dress, 2. hair, 3. blood. Referring back to p. 4—‘the nature of the Deity, the eternity of matter, and the observation of the Sabbath,’ we find the same principle at work, though there, the order is reversed for a special purpose. But he is not uniformly good in this respect. Referring forward, to l. 22, of this paragraph ‘the poet, the statesman, the philosopher, the glory of English Literature, the champion and the martyr of English liberty!’ we find the order unsatisfactory. We in our generation estimate Milton most highly *as poet*; his other claims to remembrance are inferior. That he was ‘the martyr of English Liberty,’ may be true in a sense, but it is not true in the strongest sense, which alone could justify its place as the apex of such a climax. The strictly logical order would be—John Milton the philosopher, the statesman, the poet; the champion and the martyr of English liberty and the glory of English Literature. This loses something in melody, which probably influenced the order in the text. Macaulay seems to be guided by the length of the words and phrases. It will be seen that there is a gradual expansion of the various epithets; ‘statesman’ is longer than ‘poet,’ and ‘philosopher’ than ‘statesman,’ and so on. But this is a very artificial basis for a climax.
- l. 25.—A change of paragraph after the introductory flourish, to discuss Milton’s poetry, and now we see that perhaps Macaulay had a purpose in describing Milton first as poet, and then as statesman, &c., namely to indicate the order in which he is to take up his several topics. If we refer to the end of the treatise we shall find this corroborated. Having treated of Milton’s poetry he next enters upon his political attitude. But no climactic arrangement is justifiable except where the most important thing is in

the chief place. We take note of a device for attaining emphasis, 'It is by his poetry'; the ordinary language would be 'Milton is best known by his poetry,'—a very much weaker form. We observe also that in the second member of the sentence the phrase is repeated 'It is of his poetry'; far stronger than if we said 'it is of it,' or 'of that'. Such repetitions are quite in the author's manner.

## P. 6.

- l. 1.—*To extol the poems and to decry the poet.* A neat balance, conjoined with antithesis.
- l. 12.—'Models' is here repeated in the same way as 'poetry' above.
- l. 14.—*Milton it is said.* No writer is more scrupulous regarding variety than Macaulay. He varies not only his phraseology but the length and the structure of his sentences. Particularly after exhausting the reader by a succession of long sentences he purposely reverts to a series of shorter ones by way of relief. Sometimes he separates these from one another by semicolons, sometimes by full stops: upon what principle cannot be made out. In this sentence the semicolon arrangement is adopted. The closing member is not very well placed,—the phrase 'for these advantages,' or as it stands in another edition, 'in consideration of these advantages,' hangs very loosely at the end, and should be thrown forward. Say 'and in consideration of these advantages, we must, if we would form,' &c., or 'and if we would form a just estimate of his powers, we must in consideration of these advantages, make large deductions'.
- l. 20.—*No poet.* Macaulay is much given to exaggeration. Especially is he prone to it, if he is dealing with an imaginary critic who holds a different opinion. Because critics have declared Milton's situation to be very favour-

able, Macaulay must needs lend himself to the contradictory affirmation 'that no poet ever was less favourably placed'. This is characteristic. He is far too bold and pronounced in making so strong and untenable affirmations. Note that Milton's name is brought in with emphasis at the end of the sentence.

- l. 24.—To preserve Milton's prominence, let us say, 'For this notion he has been made the butt of Johnson's clumsy ridicule'.

### P. 7.

- l. 1.—*The poet—the critic.* A model sentence,—*poet and critic*, the two contrasted parts rounding off the sentence. Mark here the variation gained by adopting a *more general designation*. It would have been simpler to say, 'Milton understood his art better than Johnson;' but the advantage of variety and also of explicitness is with the text.
- l. 7.—Once more we have a happy turn given to the end of a paragraph. Balanced and melodious.
- l. 8.—Macaulay's famous antithetic dictum, once a regular centre of criticism, but now pronounced to be quite unsound. Our author's reputation as a critic is not high. "Nobody can hit a hay-stack with more certainty, but he is not so good at a difficult mark." (Leslie Stephen's *Hours in a Library*—Third Series, p. 292.)
- l. 10.—'Have appeared in dark ages,' is repeated—a common trick of our author. Some writers would have said instead—'we do not admire them the more on that account'.

Every sentence in this paragraph is Periodic. We already see that Macaulay is partial to the Periodic, as well as to the Balanced Style.

- l. 21.—We are now to have some paragraphs of proof for the dictum that civilisation and poetry vary inversely.

As usual no pains is taken by means of explicit reference to make this perfectly clear ; but after a sentence or two light dawns upon us.

The paragraph is a good example of the copiousness of Macaulay's diction. He can without effort accumulate on a topic a wealth of language that is often amazing. Here we may note the evident preponderance of the classical as against the Saxon element.

#### P. 8.

7. 6.—As an expounder, Macaulay knows the value of examples. He is always anxious to be clear and intelligible, and one device he employs largely,—a full array of examples. It may be questioned whether an example was absolutely called for ; certainly *one* would suffice ; but with his usual profusion he gives us *two*. Mark again how they are rendered forcible by their individuality.

Now that we are at the end of our paragraph, we turn back to the opening sentence to enquire how far it is an index to the paragraph as a whole. We were led to anticipate some comparison between experimental sciences and imitative arts, but so far as we have got, there has been no mention of imitative arts. The sciences (Political Economy and Mathematics) have monopolised the space. Is this justifiable ? There are two ways of putting things right, either to isolate the opening sentence, as a small paragraph by itself, introductory to the two following, or to include the next paragraph on page 8 as well, all in one larger paragraph. Perhaps the former alternative is more satisfactory. We might then read :—‘The explanation is, that common observers reason from the progress of the experimental sciences to that of the imitative arts’. Then in a new paragraph. ‘Improvement in Science [better than ‘the former’] is gradual and slow.’

- /. 12.—New paragraph. ‘But it is not thus *with art* [it is advisable to introduce this for clearness] with music, painting,’ &c. We have now the opposing or art aspect, and again we are confronted by examples.
- /. 19.—This is just what most people deny. It is a begging of the whole question. Only we are not here concerned with the accuracy of Macaulay’s views, and may pass on. We may note that *machine* is not an accurate word in this connection. Language is the poet’s *material* not his machine. The closing sentences are neat, pointed, balanced and antithetic :—first perceive and then abstract ; particular images—general terms ; enlightened society—half civilised people ; philosophical—poetical.

## P. 9.

- /. 6.—This takes a wider sweep, but as usual we do not at first exactly see where we are going.
- /. 9.—A perfect balance kept up through several sentences. Here too, Macaulay reverts for a space to the curt and jerky style—a peculiarity that he affects at intervals, apparently for the sake of variety. The danger is, that subordinate statements are likely to be taken out of their proper place and made too prominent. And the paragraph does not escape this weakness. All this would be set down as artificial ; the effects are evidently studied.

The reasoning here, as always with Macaulay, is very plausible. The reader is hurried over the ground ; no hint is given of any qualifying circumstances ; every thing is clearly cut ; no time is allowed for consideration ; the assertions are made roundly and with confidence, until the reader finds his judgment completely carried away. Notwithstanding, the reasoning is unsound, or at any rate irrelevant.

Macaulay’s method of exposition we see consists in iter-



ating his leading propositions until they are sufficiently understood, and then clenching them by means of well selected examples.

## P 10.

2. 10.—Mark the particularity of ‘an Iago’—(Antonomasia), more forcible and telling than anything more general. Note too, the additional force both here and in the next sentence of the Figure named *Interrogation*. It affirms a statement more strongly by giving it in the form of a question. The implied answer in each case is no! It is by the studied introduction of all such devices that Macaulay succeeds in sustaining the attention.
2. 14.—A fresh paragraph apparently to discuss a characteristic of the poetic temperament—unsoundness of mind. This time Macaulay is not quite so bold; he qualifies his canon by a ‘perhaps,’ and further on he introduces an ‘almost’. This is well, for Imagination in its highest and most accurate aspect is a quality of the mind legitimate and sound.
2. 17.—A scientific definition of Poetry—proceeding first by the negative canon,—of saying what Poetry *is not*, and secondly by the positive canon—what Poetry *is*.

## P. 11.

2. 3.—His definition proper. Not by any means perfectly satisfactory—too narrow. Only, critics are not yet agreed as to what Poetry is.
2. 17.—‘Truth, indeed, is essential to Poetry; but it is the truth of madness. The reasonings are just, but the premises are false.’ This is quite in Macaulay’s vein. He delights in such puzzling, epigrammatic, and seemingly contradictory statements.
2. 24.—‘Almost’ is misplaced; it should come after ‘amounts’.

## P. 12.

- l. 2.—Too strong a statement. And the examples are irrelevant. ‘The story of poor Red Riding Hood’ is not poetry, and even if it were, it would prove nothing. Macaulay is mixing up two quite distinct meanings of imagination. The mere *vividness* or force of an impression is one thing; the *character* of it is a different and higher thing.
- l. 12.—A paragraph of application. The opening sentence is a correct clue to its contents.
- l. 13.—*In such a state*, a demonstrative phrase of explicit reference—not frequent in Macaulay.
- l. 14.—*We may expect*; but as a matter-of-fact we do not find it so.
- l. 15.—The contrasting picture, painted with Macaulay’s characteristic profusion. It is in such passages that we see the resemblance in his writing to vigorous spoken address. He is at heart a Rhetorician, and is continually betraying himself. “In everything that Macaulay wrote, we see the true Rhetorician.” (Leslie Stephen’s *Hours in a Library*—Third Series, p. 307.)

## P. 13.

- l. 1.—Another string of examples—not much to the purpose.
- l. 10.—A simile to aid the understanding, and one very pat for Macaulay’s purpose.
- l. 14.—A good example of his variety of expression. For a similar idea, compare Campbell’s *Rainbow*,
- ‘Can all that optics teach unfold  
Thy form to please me so,  
As when I dreamt of gems and gold  
Hid in thy radiant bow?’

l. 22.—Another of his paradoxical statements, amounting to an epigram.

l. 25.—We are not here concerned with the substance of Macaulay's remarks, but it is well to warn pupils that all this is unsound and indeed untrue. Our living poets are a standing disproof of the doctrine. "So far is it from being true that reason has put out imagination, that perhaps there never was a time when reason so imperatively calls imagination to her aid and when imagination enters so largely into all literary and even into scientific products." (Shairp's *Aspects of Poetry*, p. 58.) Macaulay's theory contains a germ of truth but in his exaggerating way he pushes it to an absurd extreme.

Looking at the sentences, we cannot pass over the continuous sparkle of balance and antithesis, 'a great poet—a little child'; 'a lisping man—a modern ruin'; 'great talents—intense labours—long meditation'; 'dubious success—feeble applause'. There is not a paragraph in the essay that is without some of those double-membered phrases. This amounts to a mannerism, and is more pronounced in this his earliest essay, than in his later works.

#### P. 14.

l. 4.—*His difficulties, &c.* A balance on a larger scale. As a paragraph this illustrates the rule of Parallel Construction, in attending to which Macaulay is more particular than any other modern writer. Each sentence keeps the same leading subject in the foremost place—beginning with 'he,' or 'his,' down to the very end.

l. 15.—*If these reasonings be just,*—a very good phrase of Explicit Reference gathering up into one knot for the reader's benefit, the whole matter of several preceding paragraphs. Such phrases are useful and quite neces-

sary for clearness. It may be questioned, however, whether this sentence is perfect for emphasis. It is Milton's *triumph over difficulties* that is the important thing. Re-arrange thus, 'If these reasonings be just—Milton triumphed over the greatest difficulties'; or 'Milton had the greatest difficulties to overcome'; or 'Milton has surpassed all other poets in his triumph over difficulties'. This has the additional advantage of placing 'Milton' instead of 'no poet' in the front, and of keeping up the parallelism with the next two sentences.

- l. 16.—A relapse to short sentences. It is well by a full stop to isolate 'He received a learned education,' from the succeeding members; this being a general comprehensive statement that covers and includes the particulars that follow.
- l. 24.—*The genius of Petrarch*. Some phrase of reference is here called for. The bearing is not explicit; we see in a dim way whither we are being led, but this could be improved by toning down the abruptness. We might insert—'The examples usually named are Petrarch and Cowley, but the genius of Petrarch was,' &c., or, 'His only rivals are Petrarch and Cowley, but,' &c.

#### P. 15.

- l. 4.—*The authority of Johnson is against us on this point*. This breaks the continuity of the paragraph; but seeing that we are near the end and do not resume the main topic again, not much can be said against it. The sentence could very well be conjoined with the one following,—a change that would be more in accordance with the principles of subordination. Reverting to the opening sentence, we ask what has this to do with Milton's *triumph over difficulties*? Is it in the excellence of his Latin

Poetry that his triumph appears? All this is obscure, and the paragraph is not sustained with Macaulay's usual care.

2. 9.—An illustrative simile, partly to aid the Understanding, but partly also for the sake of an agreeable sparkle at the end of a paragraph. The simile is happy.
2. 11.—A new paragraph. After the interruption to our theme, by the reference to Johnson, it is necessary to start afresh. We must again quarrel with the abruptness. He is still on the excellence of Milton's Latin verse—quite a departure, as we have said, from the triumph over difficulties, of which we were led to expect a discussion. Let us note how the paragraph is developed.
2. 14.—Keeps up his theme and his metaphor. The figure is all for intelligibility. It is not carried out with great success. The bold incongruity of oaks growing in flower-pots is very forcible of course, but when we examine it we find that 'a flower-pot' is not a soil, as it ought to be if his parallel is complete. A flower-pot may be rendered perfectly suitable for an oak, as far as *soil* is concerned; the incongruity lies in limiting the oak in space and temperature. What then is the application? Latin verse is an exotic; native poetry an oak. The soil is the poet's mind, and the wonderful thing is, that Milton's mind produced both oaks and exotics. According to Macaulay, the natural products to expect from a mind with his learning and hot-house culture, were exotics only. The retort is inevitable—Would *Paradise Lost* have been so great a poem if Milton had remained an ignorant man? All this paragraph is a digression from Milton's triumph over obstacles, and it is not till line 13 of page 16, that we resume the theme.
2. 19.—*Never before*—emphatic inversion. Compare 'such marked originality and such exquisite mimicry were never

found together before,'—a much weaker form The sentence is an example of a frequent mannerism of Macaulay—his desire to make out an absolute supremacy for his hero of the moment. There are many other examples in the essay. (Cf. p. 16, l. 25.)

- .. 24.—In reference to such criticism the following dictum is worth attention. "Macaulay's criticisms are either random discharges of superlatives or vigorous assertions of sound moral principles." (Leslie Stephen's *Hours in a Library*—Third Series, p. 292.)

#### P. 16.

- I. 14.*—*So intense, &c.* (Inversion of Predicate for Emphasis). A hackneyed metaphor used for aiding the Understanding. It is borrowed from Johnson's *Life of Milton*. 'The heat of Milton's mind might be said to sublimate his learning.' Macaulay is hardly consistent in his views. Learning, he now admits to be fuel to an ardent poetic mind; formerly he said that learning was a hindrance to the poetic faculty.

What then of the paragraph? The one theme—Milton's triumph over difficulties—is exhausted in two paragraphs, which, but for the digression upon Latin verse, could easily have been welded into one. As it is, the digression is unduly expanded and the paragraphs are unsuccessful. The author should not deviate from his subject to prove Milton's superiority to Petrarch and Cowley, or to criticise Johnson. He might accept the fact of Milton's eminence in Latin poetry as proved, and omit the latter half of the first paragraph from line 24. There would still be some awkwardness in joining on the second paragraph at this point. It would be necessary to compress considerably the discussion of 'versification in a dead langu-

age'. The general principle, in regard to all topics that deviate from the main back-bone of a paragraph, is that they must be briefly handled. Here the principle is flagrantly violated.

- l. 19.—A preliminary sentence of Explicit Reference.
- l. 20.—*The public, &c.*, a very fine sentence in Macaulay's best manner—what we should call a *long* sentence in contrast to those before and after it. It is not strictly periodic although approaching the periodic structure. It is pervaded by Balance, and has something of a climactic arrangement. Mark how 'every,' and the preposition 'of' are repeated.
- l. 28.—Another metaphor, which is further expanded in the next sentence. The figure is not particularly apposite or pertinent ; and, of course, it is not original.

P. 17.

- l. 2.—Viewed as sentences these two might be conjoined. 'Although innumerable reapers have already put their sickles into this vast field of criticism, yet the harvest,' &c. Macaulay has a habit of putting subordinate or qualifying circumstances into undue prominence by giving them complete sentences to themselves, and this is a case in point. The chief motive would seem to be, to avoid the recurrence of a long sentence.

Examining the Figure of speech,—we find a certain incongruity between 'reaper,' and 'gleaner' ; for Macaulay is going to take up, not a few out-of-the-way points of criticism, but the broader aspects. He really traverses ground that has been traversed before. In a different year, he reaps a full crop from the same field as his predecessors.

- l. 5.—All preliminaries are now cleared off, and as we are at last

in the heart of our subject, it will be well for us to be somewhat more minute in our examination.

*The most striking characteristic, &c.*—a period, of which the most important part is the *remoteness of the associations*. It would be well to bring that to the end—the place of emphasis being usurped by the relative clause. Try—‘is the extreme remoteness of its associations’. This is vague, but no more so than the original. However if we insist on introducing ‘the reader,’ say—‘is the way [in which] the reader is affected by the remoteness of its associations’.

As opening a paragraph, this sentence observes the rule that enjoins us to indicate the subject with prominence. It also illustrates well the rule of Parallel Construction. Milton’s chief characteristic leads off in the first sentence, and we wish to see it leading off in all the others.

- l. 7.—This clears up the vagueness of the last sentence, by *repeating in varied language*,—one of the common devices in exposition generally, and one that is not neglected by Macaulay. *Its effect* keeps up the Parallel Construction. The inevitable Balance is also a feature, although this is not so perfect as sometimes appears. We might, if we wished a perfect Balance say,—‘conveys directly, as by other ideas which it conveys indirectly’.
- l. 11.—*He electrifies, &c.* An illustrative metaphor, striking from its brevity, though hardly applied with correctness. What he wishes to enforce is, that the electric influence is supplied from a great distance ; but since conductors may be of any length, this is not brought out. He might say something like—‘lengthened conductors,’ or, ‘miles of conductors’.
- l. 12.—*The most unimaginative man must understand the Iliad.* This is a sentence of comparison, but our Parallel Con-



struction, up to this point perfect, is now departed from. No doubt, as a sentence apart, it is good, and gives the strong place to the 'Iliad,' but a setting in better harmony with its surroundings would be—'The Iliad must be understood by the least imaginative of men'.

- L. 13.—*Homer, &c.* This is according to principle. But there is no necessity for having it in a separate sentence; it is a mere iteration of the preceding, and may be joined on to that by a semicolon.

Incidentally we ask how this theory of Homer's poetry squares with Macaulay's theory about Imagination in early ages.

- L. 16.—Back to Milton again, and so on to the end of the paragraph.
- L. 19.—Two distinct metaphors, to clench the exposition. They are here put negatively.
- L. 20.—The first metaphor from the positive aspect.
- L. 21.—The second in the same way; and now that we have them all, we see a much better arrangement. To make these last two conform to the preceding sentence, which includes both, we should conjoin them by a semicolon. 'He sketches and leaves others to fill up the outline; he strikes the key-note and expects his hearer to make out the melody.' One of the figures is enough for clearness; moreover the second is misleading and spoils the good effect of the first. Who from *the key-note* can make out *the melody*? "a feat that 'every schoolboy' knows to be absurdly impossible, there being hundreds of different melodies starting from the same key-note." (Minto's *Manual of Prose Literature*, 1st Edition, p. 99.) Once more in these concluding sentences we have Balance and Contrast.

Altogether, what expository devices does Macaulay employ in this paragraph?

1. Iteration.

2. Illustration—Metaphors.

3. Comparison, and Contrast.

1. 23.—*We often hear of the magical influence of Poetry*,—a good example of Macaulay's abruptness. Where are we going now? There is no indication at first. These sudden plunges are made for the sake of quickening the attention. Strictly we should expect a paragraph on this theme; but, as we read on, it dawns upon us that here we have merely 'Milton electrifies us through conductors' expanded into a paragraph. This then is a subordinate statement elevated for the sake of effect into an independent place. Join this and the next sentence thus:—'The phrase magical influence of poetry though in general meaning nothing, is, when applied to the writings of Milton, most appropriate'. 'The most appropriate epithet for Milton's poetry is its magical influence.' 'Milton's poetry is most appropriately described by an epithet which generally means nothing—its magical influence.' This last is the best.

1. 25.—A simile, following out the idea in 'magical'.

1. 26.—A good contrast:—'obvious meaning—occult power'.

1. 27.—Say—'His words at first sight seem to contain no more than other words'. Mark the repetition of 'words'; 'than others' would be weak.

## P. 18.

1. 1.—*The past is present and the distant near*. Epigrammatic balance—an example of the sparkling, artificial and pointed remarks frequent in Macaulay. *No sooner*—an inversion for emphasis.
1. 3.—*The burial-places of the memory give up their dead*. A metaphor couched in the Biblical phraseology, of which our author is very fond.

- L. 4.—Mark in the use of the Imperative mood the determination to have *variety*.
- L. 7.—The same metaphor that has prevailed throughout the paragraph.
- L. 9.—An illustration from the *Arabian Nights*. Macaulay, it is said, kept up anecdotes of this sort for the express purpose of applying them on occasion to figurative use. This is more marked in our essay than in the later ones. We shall have numerous examples further on. The present example is very apposite and harmonises well with the ‘magical’ vein of the paragraph.
- L. 11.—An actual example from Literature to strengthen his case. Re-arrange for emphasis thus:—‘A remarkable instance of this’ [closer connection with what went before] ‘is Dryden’s attempt to translate some parts of *P. Lost* into his own diction—an attempt that resulted in miserable failure’. Or still better—‘Of this we have a remarkable instance, in Dryden, whose attempt to translate, &c., ended in miserable failure’. This both joins on closely to the previous sentence, and carries up the chief phrase to the place of greatest prominence.
- L. 14.—*In support of these observations*,—the unusual luxury of a phrase of Explicit Reference—demonstrative. The fact predicated in the sentence is open to question, but we expect a paragraph on the charm of Milton’s names and we get it. ‘The muster rolls of names’ is in the emphatic place, and it keeps the lead in all the sentences.
- L. 18.—A succession of shorter sentences for variety.
- L. 20.—*Link*—a trite metaphor.
- L. 21.—Another example of Macaulay’s profusion in figurative matter. Here we have a touch of sentiment in the similes, and their purpose is not mainly to aid the Understanding, for that is unnecessary in the circumstances, but to deepen the impression on the Feelings.

## P. 19.

- l. 4.—*One, another, a third, a fourth*,—a sentence to each in orderly array. In those four sentences we have a perfect example of studied variety of expression. It is a principle of Rhetoric to avoid repeating words. Here there is a quadruple variation, ‘ transports us back ’; ‘ places us among ’; ‘ evokes all the dear recollections ’; ‘ brings before us ’. Over and above, there is variety in the things recalled. Did Macaulay intend the alternation of Classical and Saxon?
- l. 6.—While he is in the sentimental vein, he heaps up the concrete circumstances that are always so telling. No order is visible in his arrangement—although ‘ prize,’ is presumably the highest of the four.
- l. 9.—By way of setting off the sentimental, he takes us to the romantic and powerful side, and then, appropriately to close his paragraph, we have an elaborate cumulation of particulars, rising in strength—though upon no recognisable principle, to the ‘ smiles of rescued princesses,’ which is sufficiently impressive as the climax.
- Virgil*,—Contiguity, Metonymy, author for his works—*an every-day figure*.
- l. 14.—Coming to particular poems,—the emphasis as it should be.
- l. 16.—Enough to say—‘ Mechanism of language could not be brought to a more exquisite degree of perfection ’.
- l. 18.—*These poems* :—demonstrative phrase of reference ; *as attar of roses*—another simile, for impressiveness as well as intelligibility—greatly exaggerated.

## P. 20.

- l. 1.—Another paragraph apparently to deal with the points of resemblance between *Comus* and the *Agonistes*. We shall see.

- l. 4.—A digression begins at this point and we hear no more of *Comus* and the *Agonistes* for two pages. Is this allowable? Apparently not. The discussion of the lyrical as against the dramatic is in order, if we only saw its connection and bearing better. We might begin with some such phrase of reference as—‘Before discussing *Comus* and *Samson Agonistes* it will be necessary for us to make some remarks on lyrical as opposed to dramatic poetry. No two kinds of composition are so essentially dissimilar as the play and the ode.’
- l. 6.—‘The dramatist’ now monopolises the space down almost to the end of the paragraph.
- l. 10.—A forcible illustration.
- l. 12.—An example from modern Literature.
- l. 13.—An original comparison—in an amusing strain, worked up with Macaulay’s usual felicity and profusion. Much less would do for the mere understanding of the writer’s drift, but when he gets on a pleasing topic like this, he is no niggard of his colour. ‘The rags of a beggar,’ is an *anti-climax* for comic effect.
- l. 21.—*This species of egotism*—a repetition in substance of the matter in the preceding sentences—a mode of explicit reference. We at last get the character of the ode. So too in the next sentence.

Not a satisfactory paragraph. We began with *Comus* and *Agonistes*, and end without them. The paragraph indeed is entirely occupied with a contrast between the lyrical and the dramatic, and even that in itself is open to improvement. It would remedy matters to throw the first two sentences into one, thus:—‘The *Comus* and the *Samson Agonistes*, if different in some respects, are alike in this, that though in form they are plays, in reality they are lyrics. Why is this? The explanation is a long one.’

We may now begin a new paragraph. 'No two kinds of composition are so,' &c., and to this the rest of the matter will fit admirably, notwithstanding the excess of illustration.

## P. 21.

- l. 1.—A change of subject followed by a consequent change of paragraph; we expect a discussion of the attempts made to amalgamate these incompatible elements. Re-arrange: 'To amalgamate these hostile elements has often been attempted but never with complete success.'
- l. 3.—It only tends to confusion to introduce this reference to *Samson*. Omit it, and join on the next sentence, 'The Greek Drama had a lyrical origin; it began by engrafting dialogue on the ode or chorus, and this lyrical origin in co-operation with the distinctive lyrical genius of Æschylus—the greatest of Athenian dramatists, served for a time to give it a lyrical character'. This is much briefer, more proportionate, and clearer. It is a habit of Macaulay's, when he comes upon a historical topic like this, to linger over it, for its own sake, longer than is necessary for the immediate purposes of his exposition.
- l. 10. *In his time*. We might with advantage condense the sentences here too, in order to shorten our route to the discussion of *Comus* and *Agonistes*, to which this is but a prelude. All explanation subsidiary to the main theme must be brief.

Say:—'In his time the Greeks had large intercourse with the East, and having not yet acquired that immense superiority, &c., which in the following generation led them to treat Asiatics with contempt, they still (Herodotus tells us) looked up to Egypt and Assyria with the veneration of disciples. Their literature was naturally tinged with the Oriental style. Æschylus shows the

influence ; his work often reminds us of Hebrew writers ; some of his dramas in particular bear strong resemblance to the Book of Job. Considered as plays his works are absurd ' ; &c.

## P. 22.

- l. 10.—*Sophocles*. A new aspect introduced without warning. Try—' After Æschylus, Sophocles made the Greek drama as dramatic as was consistent with its original lyric form, or 'its lyrical origin'.
- l. 13.—*Not of a painting but of a bas-relief*. Illustration for' clearness—intelligible enough.
- l. 14.—Balance again.
- l. 15.—Or—' Euripides attempted to improve upon Sophocles' reforms, but the task was beyond his powers, perhaps beyond any powers '.
- ll. 17-20.—These two sentences, being Iterations, should be conjoined by a semicolon. The balance resumed in l. 14 is here again active to the end of the paragraph. The metaphors 'crutches' and 'stilts' are not very intelligible.
- l. 21.—Our digression is at an end, and now we have the application. We should get into it more rapidly. It is not till line 3 of p. 23, that we reach the point. The subject of the paragraph is Milton's veneration for Euripides and its effect on the *Agonistes*. Say :—' Milton's high admiration for Euripides,—a misplaced and incongruous admiration—was injurious to the *Samson Agonistes*'. This cuts away the reference to Titania and Bottom, which, however, is far too grotesque, inaccurate and exaggerated. It is forced in here without any appositeness. The paragraph then proceeds in good order. Mark the repetition of 'Euripides'; 'he' might be ambiguous. Further on, he varies to 'the Athenian'. 'Macaulay has a perfect hatred of pronouns, and for fear of a possible entanglement between

“hims,” and “hers,” and “its,” he will repeat not merely a substantive but a whole group of substantives ; sometimes to make his sense unmistakable he will repeat a whole formula with only a change in the copula’. (Leslie Stephen, p. 308.)

## P. 23.

11.—Two sentences of perfect balance and antithesis.

- l. 14.—*Like an acid and an alkali mixed.*—A happy simile for aiding the Understanding. But it is necessary to make the remark here, that except the reader knows some chemistry the illustration will serve no good purpose. One condition of intellectual similes is, that they be more intelligible to those addressed than the thing compared. No doubt Macaulay would justify its introduction by reference to the audience he is addressing. He writes for educated men.

- l. 15.—*We.* This pronoun has a reference different from those in lines 11 and 13. Here it is the editorial ‘we,’ standing for Macaulay ; there it represents the readers by a kind of Humanity use.

The sentence is characteristic of Macaulay—balanced and expanded with an oratorical cadence.

- l. 23.—So much for the *Samson*—a new paragraph handles the *Comus*.

The opening sentence is balanced. We are to expect some account of the Italian origin of the poem.

## P. 24.

- l. 2.—This is off the rail, and we begin to suspect Dislocation.  
l. 4.—Carries on the previous sentence, though, two of the poems referred to being Italian, there is a side reference to the Italian model. This kind of criticism is quite



Macaulayan. He seems to have poems and poets ranged in his mind on a scale of merit, and, is able, when any poem crosses his path, to give it its proper relative place. *Comus*: Faithful Shepherdess:: Faithful Shepherdess: *Aminta*. Faithful Shepherdess: *Aminta*:: *Aminta*: Pastor Fido. Compare the Essay on Machiavelli:—‘Mandrogola is superior to the best of Goldoni and inferior only to the best of Molière’. So again in the essay on Addison:—‘We need not hesitate to admit that Addison has left us some compositions which do not rise above mediocrity, some heroic poems hardly equal to Parnell’s, some criticism as superficial as Dr. Blair’s, and a tragedy not very much better than Dr. Johnson’s’.

- l. 6.—*It was well for*. Or merely,—‘Milton had here no Euripides to mislead him’. This carries us back to the opening sentence.
- l. 7.—So does this, and the same strain continues to the end of the paragraph. What then are we to do with the two obstructive sentences at lines 2 and 4? Might we not begin thus?—‘The *Comus*, on the other hand, is a masque, and is certainly the noblest production of the kind in any language. It is as far superior, &c. It is framed on the Italian model, as *Samson* is framed on the Greek. Milton had here no Euripides to mislead him. Although he understood and loved the literature of modern Italy he did not feel for it, &c.’ This destroys the undue prominence of Milton’s love for Italian literature, and makes the facts more in consonance with his antipathy to its faults in the next sentence.
- l. 12.—*The faults*. Keep up the Parallel Construction by saying:—‘His mind had a deadly antipathy to the faults of his Italian predecessors. He could stoop to a plain style,’ &c.
- l. 17.—A relapse to the figurative style. *As paltry as the rags*

*of a chimney-sweeper on May-day.* A degrading simile—not at all happy. The particularity is a merit, and a characteristic, as before noted; but ‘rags’ is not finery. In trying to say a strong thing, Macaulay sometimes weakens the effect by making it *too* strong. Mr. Cotter Morison remarks (p. 61) on Macaulay’s ‘low pitched strain of allusion,’ and criticising him for his coarse comparisons quotes the following—“The victuallers soon found out with whom they had to deal, and sent down to the fleet casks of meat which dogs would not touch, and barrels of beer which smelt worse than bilge water”. On this, he observes—‘Nothing is gained by such crudity of language; and truth is sacrificed if that is a consideration. Dogs have no objection to tainted meat, and nothing can smell worse than bilge water.’

l. 20.—Much better—though hackneyed.

P. 25.

l. 3.—In order to strike the right key-note of the paragraph we should weld the two first sentences into one, by means of a semicolon.

P. 26.

l. 1.—We feel ourselves being drawn on to an eloquent close—the highest point yet reached in the essay; the method being to heap up synonymous phrases. ‘He rises even above himself’—an every-day *epigram*.

l. 11.—By culling abundantly from Milton’s own lyrical phrases in the *Comus*, Macaulay concludes his paragraph with a poetic and eloquent flourish. The word ‘*smells*’ is out of harmony with the situation,—having acquired a different meaning since Milton’s day.

It is a very fair stroke of originality in Macaulay to compare Milton to the Good Spirit in the *Comus*. The

simile is utilised for the purpose of adding to the impression.

P. 27.

- l. 5.—A short paragraph dealing with *Paradise Regained*.
- l. 12.—The emphasis is imperfect. 'Was mistaken,' is the strong point, and should get the place of strength—the end. Try a few variations—'In preferring this work to the *P. L.*, Milton, we must readily admit, was mistaken'—or 'was admittedly mistaken,' or 'admittedly made a mistake'. 'We must readily admit, that,' or simply, 'no doubt, Milton in preferring this work to *P. L.*, made a mistake.' These are all better—so far as emphasis is concerned. To say, 'in preferring this work to the *P. L.*, we must admit that Milton was mistaken,' would be, to make a gross grammatical error—'we' and 'in preferring' being taken in erroneous conjunction.
- l. 15.—Another example of judging by a relative scale, referred to above.
- l. 17.—*To every poem*,—great exaggeration. Few critics would commit themselves to such an unqualified and confident dictum.
- l. 20.—A vague and general allusion for the sake of exciting curiosity.
- l. 23.—Abrupt introduction as usual.
- l. 25.—Vary thus—'The subjects of the two poems are alike in some points; but the manner of treatment is quite different'.

P. 28.

- l. 2. - A wonderful condescension for Macaulay in the matter of explicit reference. To avoid the repetition of the names, he varies to 'our own great poet'—and 'the father of Tuscan literature'.

- l. 5.—A general statement of contrast—expressed by a figure of similitude. But here again we are met by a condition of intellectual similes—that they must be more intelligible than the thing compared. We illustrate *the unknown* by an appeal to *the known*. The ordinary reader does not know the difference between Egyptian and Mexican hieroglyphics, and, as if anticipating this, Macaulay proceeds to expand his meaning. There are several ways of remedying this, for remedy is called for. He should either leave the illustration to come in after the point is brought out, or begin by informing the reader what is the difference between the two sets of hieroglyphics.
- l. 7.—*The images which Dante employs, &c.* It is not very clear which of the two hieroglyphics this corresponds to. The reader should be saved all trouble in cases of parallelism. It would be an improvement to re-arrange thus, ‘Dante’s poetry is like the picture-writing of Mexico; Milton’s like the hieroglyphics of Egypt. Dante’s images speak for themselves; they stand simply for what they are: Milton’s have a signification which is often discernible only to the initiated; their value depends less on what they directly represent than on what they remotely suggest.’ We begin with Dante because the paragraph is finally given up to him; moreover this preserves the parallelism with the second sentence. Further, because Milton and Dante are included in the first sentence, we must include them in the next, especially since by and by Milton is dropt out of the paragraph. A semicolon separates the two iterated members, while the larger break between Milton and Dante is indicated by a colon.
- l. 12.—We now see the wisdom of tacking on all the statements about Milton, as appendages to those about Dante; here

the Italian poet takes the lead and maintains it. The alterations made preserve for Dante the prominence throughout, and establish continuity in the paragraph. Milton's turn comes in the next paragraph.

- l. 15.—A succession of short sentences, varied by a long one at l. 18.

P. 29.

- l. 2.—*Not for the sake, &c.*, exposition by negatives or contrast, always serviceable for clearness.
- ll. 5, 8, and 10.—Three sentences of exemplification, in which it is characteristic of our author to be profuse.
- l. 13.—The contrasting picture. He could have included all this in the previous paragraph by deftly managing the opening sentences, but he probably felt it less easy to drive the two themes abreast, than to take them separately. He is careful to indicate his intentions.
- l. 23.—A farther example from the other side. We thought we had done with them.

P. 30.

- l. 10.—A new paragraph, for what reason is not very clear. The chief motive is probably the fact that he had been led away from his subject to indulge in some apologetic remarks regarding the rudeness of his translation. It would however be quite correct to dispense with the break.

The fact that Macaulay is able to establish such a complete parallel between the similes of these two poets—a contrast so striking, exact, and universal,—makes us suspicious of its truth. The danger attaching to all such comparisons is, that the writer is betrayed into exaggeration for the purpose of making the antithesis more telling; and as a matter of fact there is no doubt that Macaulay tampers with the realities, here and elsewhere for the

sake of effect. 'It is a peculiarity of Macaulay's mind that he rarely sees problems, that he is not stopped by difficulties out of which he anxiously seeks an issue. We never find him wondering with suspended judgment in what direction his course may lie. On the contrary, he has seldom any doubt or difficulty about anything, his mind is always made up, and he has a prompt answer for every question.' (J. Cotter Morison, p. 125).

- l. 24.—A substantial paragraph of graphic description, prolonging the detailed contrast between Milton and Dante—this time on a wider view.

### P. 31.

- l. 2.—A general affirmation followed up by an array of particulars. Another example of Macaulay's love for pictorial profusion.
- l. 10.—Mark the Balance and Parallelism in *his own hands,—his own feet,—his own brow*.
- l. 13.—The parallel construction has been maintained with perfection up to this point. *The reader* should not usurp the place of prominence. Say:—'Such a tale, the reader would throw aside,' &c., or 'Such a tale would be thrown aside in incredulous disgust unless it were,' &c.
- l. 17.—Still another parallel, expanded in the usual way, by accumulating concrete particulars.

### P. 32.

- l. 14.—A new topic—the poet's management of supernatural agents. The sentence is well arranged, but it would be better to have 'supernatural agents' at the end. 'Of all poets, Milton has succeeded best in dealing with supernatural agents.' 'More than any other poet, Milton has been successful in the introduction of supernatural agents.'

‘Milton has succeeded better than any other poet in depicting the agency of supernatural beings.’

ll. 19 and 22.—Here we have Dislocation. It would tend to continuity to throw the sentence at l. 19, to the end of the paragraph. Read thus: ‘Milton has been often censured for ascribing to spirits many functions of which spirits must be incapable. But these objections [phrase of reference], though sanctioned by eminent names, originate, we venture to say, in profound ignorance of the art of poetry. [Then bring in sentence at l. 19.] The most fatal error which a poet can possibly commit in the management of his machinery, is that of attempting to philosophise too much.’

l. 27.—*What is spirit?* The most pronounced example of Macaulay’s abruptness that we have yet had in the essay. The whole paragraph is built up of sentences in Macaulay’s curtest manner; there is not a single long one to relieve the jerkiness. The abruptness is increased by the interrogation. All this, of course, is a studied effect, and we can only make some tentative suggestions as to how it would run if the affectation were banished:—‘Although we observe certain phenomena, we cannot explain them into material causes. And, although we therefore infer that there exists something which is not material, yet of this something we have no idea; we can define it only by negatives; we can reason about it only by symbols; we use the word, but we have no image of the thing. Now the business of poetry is with images and not with words; although the poet uses words, they are merely the instruments, not the objects, of his art; they are the materials which he is to dispose in such a manner as to present a picture to the mental eye. And if they are not so disposed, &c.’ By grouping the sentences in this way, according to the closeness of their connexion in meaning, we are more in

accord with the principles of *Unity*, and also remove somewhat of the disagreeable jerkiness.

P. 33.

- l. 14.—The propriety of a new paragraph may be questioned. ‘Logicians may reason about abstractions,’ has nothing to do with the substance of the after-remarks. Suppose we try:—‘Logicians may reason about abstractions; but the great mass of men must have images,’ we are nearer the mark, for the real topic throughout is the prevailing love in mankind of the concrete, as against the abstract. It would tend to clearness to begin:—‘Abstractions are necessary for the logician; but the mass of mankind must have concrete images. [Then for the sake of close connexion.] On no other principle can we explain the strong tendency that the multitude in all ages and countries have manifested towards idolatry.’ This is much better, but still there is a hiatus. What Macaulay seems to mean is, that the poet must use images because mankind generally love images better than abstract ideas; but this he has not made clear. Some phrase of explanation at the beginning of the paragraph would be useful—‘This demand for images from poetry is explained by the general mental constitution of mankind. However useful abstract ideas may be to logicians, the multitude must have images. On no other principle can we explain the strong tendency they have in all ages shown to idolatry.’
- l. 18.—He now goes on to prove, from prevailing idolatry, this universal taste for the concrete, but here at the outset is what seems a point-blank contradictory case. It gets too much prominence, being, as it is, tributary to the main stream. Say—‘If the first inhabitants of Greece, as there is reason to believe, worshipped one invisible deity, in a few centuries the necessity of having something more



definite to adore, produced the innumerable crowd of gods and goddesses.'

- l. 23.—The same principle applies here. It would altogether ruin the exposition to let the contradictory instances stand on their own feet in complete sentences; they must be shuffled into the main sentence, especially as Macaulay pays no heed to their significance. Say—'In like manner, though the ancient Persians thought it impious to exhibit the Creator under a human form, even they transferred to the sun,' &c.
- l. 27.—A well-turned Period. We have had now in illustration of his principle, the Greeks, the Persians, and the Jews; and next comes Christianity.

#### P. 34

- l. 2.—Say for clearness:—'Then in regard even to Christianity, perhaps none of the secondary causes which Gibbon has assigned for the rapidity with which it, in contrast to Judaism, spread over the world, operated more powerfully than this feeling'.
- ll. 6 and 8.—These two sentences should be in one, and we may either join them by a mere semicolon, or try some deeper modification, as for example—'The noble conception of God uncreated, incomprehensible, invisible, might be admired by the philosopher; but the crowd,' &c., or 'Noble as the conception of God uncreated, &c., must have seemed to the philosopher, yet because it presented no image to the minds of the crowd, it attracted few worshippers'.
- l. 11.—A rhetorical outburst in harmony with the theme—balanced, antithetic and climactic in arrangement. With the exception of the two items last in each series—*bleeding on the cross*, and *the swords of thirty legions*,—which are clearly the highest in the separate scales, there is no

attempt at definite and accurate grouping. It illustrates Macaulay's own love of concrete circumstances, and his profuse display of particulars, uncalled for from a strictly scientific stand-point.

l. 18.—A fifth example—Christianity corrupted.

ll. 20 and 21.—The general, as usual, before the particular. Mark, as often before, the studied variety in *assumed the office of,—took the place of,—consoled for the loss of,—succeeded to.*

### P. 35.

l. 4.—A secondary contrast is seen in 'loveliness—dignity,' as also in 'chivalry—religion'.

l. 11.—*Politics*,—quite a new departure; but as it is only hinted at, not carried out, it may very well hang at the end of the paragraph. 'In Politics,' is the most important part of the sentence, and ought therefore to occupy a more telling place; either at the beginning or at the end. 'In Politics, it would not be difficult to show that the same rule holds good.' This is somewhat ambiguous; we could say, however, 'In Politics the same rule holds good,' or 'That in Politics the same rule holds good, could easily be shown'. Further, at the end: 'It would not be difficult to show that the same rule holds good in Politics'.

l. 13.—*Embodied* is here the emphatic word. Recast:—'Doctrines, before they can excite a strong public feeling must, we are afraid, be embodied,' or 'Before doctrines can excite strong public feeling, they must, we are afraid, be embodied'. This would allow us to dispense with the italics.

l. 15.—As usual too roundly stated. Balance at the close.

Turning back now and surveying this paragraph as a whole, we see that it contains an elaborate proof of the doctrine that 'mankind must have images'. This is illus-

trated from Religion and Politics, and in Religion by reference to five distinct areas, Greece, Persia, Judaism and Christianity, both in origin and in corruption. Until we get each separately, we have no idea how many may be introduced to our notice : it would relieve the reader to give him some note of warning, as for example, at p. 33, l. 18.

‘The principle is seen at work, in the religion of Greece and of Persia, in Judaism and in Christianity, both in origin and corruption ; it is noticeable also in Politics’. Macaulay clearly establishes his case, but the question is, whether he does not treat us to more examples than are called for. There is no doubt that one half of the expansion might be dispensed with, without injury to the exposition. ‘Clearness is the first of the cardinal virtues of style ; and nobody ever wrote more clearly than Macaulay. He sacrifices much in order to obtain it. He proves that two and two make four with a pertinacity which would make him dull, if it were not for his abundance of brilliant illustrations. . . . He goes on blackening the chimney with a persistency which somehow amuses us because he puts so much heart into his work. He proves the most obvious truths again and again, but his vivacity never flags.’ (Leslie Stephen, p. 308.)

l. 18.—‘*From these considerations.*’ This begins well with a demonstrative phrase of reference, gathering up the previous paragraph, and closely appended to it.

‘No poet would escape a failure,’—double negatives. Much simpler to say, ‘a poet who should affect, &c., would be sure to fail disgracefully,’ or, ‘to make a disgraceful failure’.

l. 21.—A new aspect altogether. The sentence is good, but how about the paragraph? What is *its* theme? This ought to be at the commencement of it, and the course that is open to us is, to isolate the opening sentence—‘From these

considerations,' &c., as a small paragraph by itself. This gives it the prominence it deserves, and clears the way for the new subject. Begin then—'At the same time, there was another extreme'.

- l.* 23.—We are eagerly on the outlook for the other objectionable extreme, but it is not here. Indeed, we have to read on to line 6 of next page, before it dawns upon us, and even then it is not very clearly set forth. This is like Macaulay. Having given us a vague hint, he allows us to piece together a number of equally vague affirmations till we get the complete idea for ourselves. A punctilious writer would have said something like this: 'Milton shunned the metaphysical extreme; at the same time there was another which, though less dangerous, was equally to be avoided—the extreme of over-concreteness. Since Milton wrote in an age of philosophers and theologians, and since the imaginations of men are in a great measure under the control of their opinions, and since the most exquisite art of poetical colouring can produce no illusion, &c., it was necessary for the poet to abstain from,' &c.

### P. 36.

- l.* 6.—Note the metaphors 'giving a shock,'—'breaking a charm,' all consistently used for intelligibility.
- l.* 9.—A sentence of reference rendered necessary by the haphazard method of the previous statements. Some writers would have made this the beginning sentence.
- ll.* 17 and 18.—The Interrogations present an agreeable variety, and are forcible in themselves as affirmations.
- l.* 27.—*Philosophically in the wrong—poetically in the right.* A good example of one of our author's favourite modes of expression—a pointed and epigrammatic balance and contrast.

## P. 37.

l. 2.—A successful period. The adjuncts are crowded on to the subject, and the predicate kept till the end.

l. 7.—A new canon abruptly introduced as the start of a fresh paragraph. As we go on, we find that both Milton and Dante, as before, are to be gauged and compared from this stand-point. All that can be said about this is, that most other writers would have taken care to make their position more definite, in some such way as this:—

‘In regard to the principle that poetry relating to the beings of another world ought to be at once mysterious and picturesque, Milton and Dante again offer some points of contrast. Milton’s poetry is both mysterious and picturesque; but Dante’s is picturesque to the exclusion of all mystery.’ But why introduce Milton at all here without discussing him in detail? Rather leave him over till next paragraph, where he will be fully treated. We might say,—‘There is a principle that poetry, &c., should be, &c., and while Milton satisfies both conditions, Dante fails in one. His poetry is picturesque, beyond, &c.; its effect approaching to that produced by the pencil or the chisel; but it is picturesque to the exclusion of all mystery.’

l. 21.—From this point we have a series of Macaulay’s characteristically abrupt sentences, in his most piquant vein.

l. 23.—A few epigrammatic and pointed sentences.

l. 25.—Two examples close the paragraph,—intended to prove Dante’s lack of mystery.

## P. 38.

l. 10.—The contrasting picture—Milton’s love of mystery. The central fact might be made more prominent. ‘Milton, on the other hand, is full of mystery. His spirits are,’ &c.

- l. 12.—Note that while Dante's spirits were described positively, Milton's are described negatively.

## P. 39.

- l. 1.—Here the exposition is still further complicated by another comparison. In order to clear up the question of mystery, Macaulay thinks it necessary to compare Milton to Æschylus. The emphasis is misplaced. Say —'Perhaps the angels and devils of Milton may best bear a comparison with the gods and demons of Æschylus'.
- l. 8.—A climactic arrangement.
- l. 9.—Mark the periodic influence of 'less—than' and 'those—in which'.
- 'Egypt' and 'Hindustan,' Figure of Contiguity—Metonymy, container for the thing contained,—quite common.

## P. 40.

- l. 16.—Another of Macaulay's Rhetorical and studied outbursts, with a climactic arrangement.
- All this paragraph is a digression to little purpose and evidently uncalled for. We do well, therefore, not to spend much time in examining it.
- l. 24.—This owns to the digression, and rightly enough makes the reader aware of the return to the main theme. The sentence is a good period, and ends with the important and emphatic words 'moral qualities'.
- l. 28.—Once more, Macaulay's anxiety to relieve the reader from too prolonged a strain, induces him to give complete sentences to subordinate facts. The 'yet' in line 4 of next page shows the relationship, and some writers would have felt no difficulty in keeping this subordination apparent by a 'though'. 'Though they are not egotists, and though they rarely obtrude, &c., yet it would be diffi-

cult,' &c. This is heavy and laboured, a fault that Macaulay could not away with ; and he chooses in consequence what he considers a less evil, want of due subordination.

The statements are in Macaulay's paradoxical way.

#### P. 41.

- l. 1.—This is an unnecessary piece of figurative embellishment. The metaphor is carried into details that are disagreeable and in bad taste. (Compare Note on p. 24, l. 17).

The question arises, whether 'moral qualities' of the first sentence and 'personal feelings' of the last are synonymous. They are evidently meant to be synonymous, but that they are so, is another matter.

- l. 8.—A neat sentence illustrating balance conjoined with antithesis. From this opening sentence we expect a sustained contrast between 'the loftiness of spirit,' and 'the intensity of feeling'; but as we proceed, we find that Dante's 'intensity of feeling' monopolises the paragraph. This is not as it should be. Some indication ought to be given to the reader, that Milton is to stand by for the present, till Dante's characteristics be discussed. But such notes of warning are quite foreign to our author's method.

Throughout the paragraph we notice Macaulay's abruptness, his exaggeration, and his illustrative faculty.

- l. 20.—An original and striking Simile—addressed to the Intellect, and satisfying all the conditions.
- l. 25.—An elaborate but hackneyed metaphor.

#### P. 42.

- l. 3.—Macaulay, in his desire to heap up brilliant and parallel phrases, is not always careful to consider their compatibility. We have had slight cases before, but this is an

extreme example'; 'a haggard and woeful stare of the eye,' and 'a sullen and contemptuous curve of the lip,' are an impossible combination. (Minto's *Prose*, 1st ed., p. 99.)

- l. 7.—This is again misleading. The real topic is Milton's 'loftiness of thought,' but that is not clear, till later on. The historical facts are merely to make 'loftiness of spirit' more outstanding. As usual we have much pointed balance (ll. 10, 18, 23); and a large amount of concrete particulars.
- l. 11.—An oratorical sentence—well managed,—containing a Climax in four steps. (1) Some died a natural death; (2) Some emigrated; (3) Some were prisoners; (4) Some had been executed. Here the order is studied, and it is perfect—each member being a distinct rise on the preceding. To try any other order would be to violate a first principle of Rhetoric.
- l. 13.—*Taken away from the evil to come*—one of the many *Euphemisms* for death.
- l. 14.—*Carried into foreign climates*—a slight Figure of Contiguity. 'Climates' stands for 'countries'. Only it is so frequent as almost to have lost its figurative look.
- l. 16.—*Poured forth their blood*—another Figure of Contiguity—Synecdoche; 'blood' being a palpable and essential adjunct of 'living beings'.
- l. 18.—*A pander*,—Figure of Similarity, Synecdoche,—Antonomasia—from Pandarus, uncle of Cressida in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*. It has so far lost its figurative force as to be frequently used as a verb.
- ll. 20 and 25.—Once more a Simile aptly taken from the *Comus*—as at p. 26, l. 5.

P. 43.

- l. 1.—A very remarkable sentence as regards the cumulation of conjunctions. It is evidently modelled on Paul's—



'For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature,' &c. (Rom. viii. 38.) Conjunctions in general are weakening, but when introduced as here, in quantity, they add to the effect. Perhaps a Climax is intended in this cumulation of miseries, but no order is apparent, and it would not be possible to arrange them in a single group.

l. 5.—Emphasis good.

l. 9.—A well-arranged period. The 'such—such, is the chief aid to its periodic character. 'Retired to his hovel to die,' is drawn from Macaulay's imagination,—a grossly exaggerated statement to heighten the effect on the reader.

l. 13.—*Every calamity*—The 'every' is too much. We have had too many examples already of such unthinking exaggeration.

The whole paragraph gradually discloses 'loftiness of thought' as its topic, but it is not so clearly handled as usual. We are half through it before the subject stands forth. To bring up the sentence at p. 42, l. 27, 'if ever,' &c., to the beginning, would conduce to clearness: but many other alterations would be necessary.

l. 16.—Once more an elaborate period; the suspension being due to the 'though'. Macaulay may with perfect justice be called a 'periodic' writer, for though he on occasion affects a loose style, the frequent recurrence of well rounded and artificial periods stamps him as a lover of this structure.

l. 21.—Mark—'*in the physical and in the moral world*'. Our author is singularly correct (though not perfect) in repeating his prepositions and his articles, where strict grammar demands it. 'In the physical and moral world'—would be intolerable.

- l. 23.—The paragraph is full of concrete and picturesque detail, as well as tainted with Macaulay's heightened and hyperbolic affirmations.

## P. 44

- l. 2.—An incompatible and impossible conjunction. (Compare Note on p. 82, l. 19).
- l. 5.—A piece of poetical embellishment—consisting of a simile worked up with concrete circumstances. It is chiefly intellectual but in part also emotional. 'Roses and myrtles blooming unchilled on the verge of an avalanche,' is an absurd idea. The author possibly meant 'glacier'.
- All this while, the reader wonders as to the subject of the exposition—which is, we should remember, Milton's 'loftiness of thought'. As yet we have had little light shed on this aspect, and not till later is it clear.
- l. 11.—A departure. The emphasis in the first member is misplaced. Say—'In all Milton's works, there may be found traces of his peculiarly lofty character; [well to keep this before the reader; it is apt to fall out of view unless kept prominently in the foreground], but it is most strongly displayed in the sonnets'.
- l. 13.—Does not deserve a place to itself as a complete sentence; it is a mere aside, and as such should be crushed into a subordinate place. Only in l. 18, do we take up the thread. All before that is subsidiary, although as usual by Macaulay's method it is elevated into a place of prominence.
- l. 21.—Another example of Macaulay's love for accumulating particulars. The sentence too, is a long-suspended period.
- l. 28.—*These little pieces*, is a variation from *those remarkable poems* of l. 13.

## P. 45.

l. 4.—This is not the subject of the paragraph. Indeed, when we enquire into the necessity for a paragraph break, we find that the need for one is not very apparent. He is still on the ‘loftiness of thought,’ as displayed best in the Sonnets. We should continue the same paragraph, and clear up the relation by some explicit phrase like—‘No doubt the sonnets are more or less striking, &c. Mark the artificial balancing of ‘more or less striking’ and ‘more or less interesting’. The same thing occurs in l. 17—‘a spirit so high,’ and ‘an intellect so powerful’. These four paragraphs—taken up with a not-very-orderly or succinct discussion of Milton’s loftiness of thought, could be very easily condensed into a single compact paragraph. It would be a good Home Exercise for pupils, to ask them to produce such an abstract.

l. 17.—A new topic—Milton’s *public conduct*. Apart from the change of paragraph, which of necessity implies some new subject, we are not prepared for this; moreover, seeing that Milton’s poetry is not again mentioned, and that the second half of the essay is given up to discussing his public life, the transition is so great as to justify a greater stress upon it, thus. ‘This exhausts what we have to say on the poetry of Milton; the rest of our remarks shall deal with his public conduct.’

[Referring to page 16, we recall the sentence: ‘It is not our intention to attempt anything like a complete examination of the poetry of Milton,’—a declaration that has been strictly adhered to. We have had a merely desultory and somewhat rambling exposition of various leading points.]

This should be isolated as a sentence-paragraph, and a new paragraph might then begin with a variation of

phrase: 'Milton's political attitude was such as was to be expected,' &c. The statement is necessarily vague to start with, but as this paragraph does nothing beyond explain the circumstances, the opening sentence might be dispensed with altogether, or incorporated at a fitting place in the next paragraph.

- l. 21.—*Oromasdes and Arimanes*—Figure of Similarity—Synecdoche,—Individual for the Species.
- l. 22.—This extended view of the forces at work, adds to the impressiveness.

P. 46.

- l. 2.—A climax in three steps, the order of which is presumably correct. At the same time, it is well to inquire what is pertinent in an advance from America to Greece, and then to Europe; but we have to consider the circumstances in each case. 'Depths of American forests,' is certainly weaker than 'Greece after 2000 years of slavery'; but in the third point, the propriety is not so marked, although the breadth of the ground covered is sufficient justification. Our author, as usual, arranges according to the length of the clauses. Other Figures in the paragraph are 'liberty and despotism'—Contrast: 'destinies staked'—an everyday metaphor: 'Greece'—metonymy—container for thing contained: 'Kindled a fire in the breasts of the oppressed.' &c.—metaphorical but hackneyed.
- l. 10.—*Of those principles*—an artificial inversion for the sake of close connexion with what precedes. To place it in the end, in conjunction with 'champion,' would spoil the sentence. So, too, as regards emphasis. We might say: 'Of those principles, &c., the most devoted and eloquent literary champion was Milton'. We must judge between these two cases, in view of the subject of the paragraph, as well as in respect of what has already been said. Now, the paragraph is really not about Milton at

all. Moreover, if it were, we do not wish to accord the place of chief importance to his name, seeing we have had it so frequently. The chief stress rests on his championship. Therefore, as a mere matter of emphasis, Macaulay's order is good. But as to the paragraph. Its real theme is the explanation of the prejudice against Milton's conduct as unjustifiable. We should not imagine this from the opening sentence. So that once again, as often before, we find Macaulay transgressing the *third* great Paragraph Law.

7. 12.—The necessity for this sentence is not apparent. It is but the direct expression of an idea implied in the last paragraph; it has no connexion with the sentence before.
7. 13.—The 'unjustifiable' comes in with due force at the end. Macaulay has, on the whole, a uniform appreciation of the laws of emphasis. At last, we think we have struck the vein of the paragraph. We shall see.
7. 15.—*The Civil War*. This seems a new topic. An example of Macaulay's 'superlative manner'. 'More discussed and less understood than any event in English history'—paradoxical and exaggerated.
7. 17.—A characteristic illustration.
7. 20.—The remaining sentences, though exemplifying Balance, as well as Explicit Reference, and Emphasis at various points, are most noticeable from the paragraph aspect. What is their bearing on Milton's conduct? We find that, from Milton, the author has digressed to put in a clear light the relative value of the historians of the Civil War, and there is nothing said as yet of how that affects Milton. This is open to improvement. We might suggest as the second sentence, 'Not that all his countrymen, even yet, are prepared, like us, to justify his conduct. For, although no event in English history has been more discussed than the Civil War, no event has been less understood. And the explanation is easy.'

## P. 47.

- l. 15.—*Respectable* is brought to the end, with something of an artificial turn.

## P. 48.

- l. 1.—*Hated religion so much that he hated liberty—the aexterity of an advocate, while affecting the impartiality of a judge.*  
A combination of Balance, Contrast, and Epigrammatic point. 'Liberty' and 'Religion' are repeated, because pronouns would lead to ambiguity.
- l. 5.—After a digression, the return to the main theme demands a new paragraph. This is now much clearer, and the author is, at last, profusely accommodating in declaring his intentions. His line of argument is—'Justify the Civil War and you justify Milton. Many think the Civil War unjustifiable, but that is because the great historians have all been antagonistic to it.'

We cannot say that Macaulay's expository method is here at its best. An alternative and preferable order would be to begin with a sentence-paragraph already suggested—'This exhausts what we have to say on the poetry of Milton; the rest of our remarks shall deal with his public conduct'.

[New Paragraph.] 'Milton lived at one of the most memorable eras in the history of mankind,' &c., on to 'loosed the knees of the oppressors with a strange and unwonted fear.'

[New Paragraph.] 'Of these principles, then struggling for their infant existence, Milton was the most devoted and eloquent literary champion. From a man of a spirit so high and an intellect so powerful, this was to be expected. But all his countrymen are not prepared like us to justify

his conduct. The reason is, that although no event in English History has been more discussed than the Civil War no event has been less understood. The explanation is easy. The best and most read historians have been adverse to Milton's cause. The Roundheads,' &c., down to 'impartiality of a judge.'

\* The question then comes to be, not whether Milton's public conduct is to be approved or condemned, but whether the resistance of the people to Charles I. is justifiable or criminal.' The rest of the paragraph is made up of Macaulay's explicit declarations as to the next part of his exposition and is very characteristic. He professes great generosity in dealing with his opponents; affirms that he wishes to take no undue advantage; and even concedes more than he ought, for the sake of argument; so confident is he of the superiority of his position. This is according to his usual method.

- l. 21.—At last we find that his argument reduces itself to this: 'Can we justify the Revolution of 1688?' He assumes that all approve of that event, and proceeds to draw a parallel between the two cases. This is not unexceptionable. Say—'And assuming that the Revolution of 1688 was justifiable, we confidently affirm, that every reason that can be urged in favour of it may be urged,' &c.
- l. 26.—The order is good; but we might try a few variations: 'The warmest admirers of Charles cannot, we think, venture to say that he was a better sovereign than (his son) James II., save in one respect'. 'That Charles was a better sovereign than James, not even his warmest admirers will venture to say,—except in one respect.' 'The warmest admirers of Charles can, we think, venture to say that only in one respect was he a better sovereign than his son.' These are all inferior, and show Macaulay's eye for order. But although the 'In one respect,'

is the subject of the paragraph, and deserves the first place, it does not here satisfy the law that insists on qualifying adjuncts being placed so as to affect the words they are intended to affect. It should modify 'better sovereign'. Try 'If Charles was a better man than James, he was so in the opinion of even his warmest admirers only in one respect'; or 'as to Charles being a better sovereign than James, his warmest admirers will claim for him, superiority in one respect only'.

- l. 28.—Say—'He was not, they affirm, a Papist. Well, not in name and profession. But both Charles himself and his,' &c

P. 49.

- l. 3.—'The Vices of Popery,' are given in a balanced and climactic arrangement; of which it is difficult to speak, save in regard to the rise from the first,—*the subjection of reason to authority*—to the last,—*intolerance*.
- l. 12.—The subject of the Paragraph is not in the first, but in the second sentence. It would be an improvement to conjoin the two, thus—'misrepresented by a class of men, who, while,' &c. 'Excuse' and 'abuses' is a doubtful Alliteration. Say—'apology for existing abuses,' or 'excuse for existing evils'.
- l. 18.—Another perfect example of Macaulay's neat and antithetical balance.
- l. 23.—A metaphor ugly in itself and quite out of keeping with the situation. 'Ravenous' is not a happy epithet for 'flies'. Of course an intentional degradation is implied, and it is necessary to exaggerate. The point of relevance is the instinct to discover things that are unsound; and as regards these, the figure has a certain aptness, but otherwise it utterly breaks down.



## P. 50.

- l. 4.—A new paragraph. As the last began with the misrepresentation of Revolution principles there would be no breach of principle in conjoining the two. The circumstance that weighs with Macaulay is probably the fact that he is now to apply the principles to details.
- l. 6.—Macaulay relapses once more into an abrupt style, deficient in explicit reference, with the result that, on the whole, the passage is not very intelligible. The references are vague, and the whole paragraph would admit of being rewritten.

## P. 51.

- l. 15.—A fresh paragraph devoted to contradicting the opinion that James's Catholicism was the cause of his expulsion.
- l. 15.—*Nor can any person*,—a very good example of the involved period. There is no complete sense until the very last; the suspension being effected by relative and conditional clauses, and the alternative 'or'.

## P. 52.

- l. 2.—After an elaborate period, the next sentence is agreeable from its brevity.
- l. 5.—*Tyranny*—emphatically placed. The next sentence is as good an example as we may well desire of Balanced antithesis, where the effect is heightened by the use of *the same terms*. The changes are rung very felicitously upon 'Catholic' and 'Tyrant'.
- l. 11.—We are now well on our way, and in l. 14 we reach a definite issue. We need not examine this in detail; it illustrates nothing we have not already had; it is a mere example of Macaulay's rather strong assertions, and the hard measure he deals out to opponents.

## P. 53.

- l. 16.—Clenches the argument by a bold contrast.
- l. 19.—A plausible objection—in the form of an Interrogation. Throughout the paragraph, it too is dealt with in a characteristic way—numerous examples are given ; numerous questions are asked ; and numerous short sentences hurry the reader to Macaulay's conclusion,

## P. 55.

- l. 5.—Mark the 'historic' present tense in this and the succeeding sentences—all for the sake of vivifying the narrative. Note, again, the intentional curtness in the sentence structure.
- l. 15.—A paragraph made up for the most part of Interrogations, which in the intensity of their hurry and rush, carry the reader to the end with a swiftness impossible by affirmative statements.

## P. 56.

- l. 14.—*Testimony to character.* Again the new and emphatic idea gets the place of importance at the end.  
This dramatic mode of introducing objection and answer is very effective, and numbers itself among Macaulay's many piquant devices of style. Say: 'Charles' rather than 'he'.
- l. 18.—A change of front. For the sake of argument he first concedes the private wishes ; but now withdraws his concession.
- l. 19.—All this is very Macaulayan—a contemptuous and high-handed treatment of opponents' arguments. There is a tone of sarcastic depreciation throughout, more thorough-going in the next paragraph, but sufficiently well-marked in 'the ordinary decencies which half the tombstones in

England claim for those who lie beneath them'. This is a felicitous and original way of saying: 'ordinary decencies of the average Englishman'.

- l. 26.—The antithesis here is very bold and characteristic. Macaulay is not scrupulously impartial in striking a balance between opposing views. He minimises his opponent's claims—'good father—good husband,' and puts his own in a forcible and heightened manner—'fifteen years of persecution, tyranny, and falsehood'. 'Ample apologies' is a small specimen of *Irony*—a figure which consists in saying the very opposite of what is meant.
- l. 28.—Still in the ironical and sarcastic vein, which is now extended by means of a series of pungent contrasts, very good as flippant and glittering rhetoric, but futile as argument. Macaulay brings together in a climactic order, the greatest charges he can prefer against Charles, and side by side with each, he places an ordinary, domestic, decent virtue. There are two parallel streams—one *climactic*; the other, *anti-climactic*. All this is for effect. What of the climax? (1) Breaking coronation oath; (2) Handing over his people to merciless prelates; (3) Violating the Petition of Right. It is hard to judge of the propriety of this order. The chief justification is that the items are in the order in which they severally occurred. Note that there is a propriety in the anti-climax attached to each. 'Coronation oath—marriage vow': 'merciless treatment of his subjects—loving regard for his son', 'fickleness in dealing with the prayers of others—assiduity in praying for himself.' Although, then, we might change the order of (1), (2), (3), we should have to effect a corresponding change in the elements of the anti-climax. Mark the studied variety in 'charge,' 'accuse,' and 'censure'. There is no more pointed

paragraph than this in the whole essay. Its shortness is favourable to its being committed to memory.

## P. 57.

- l. 12.—A wider consideration. ‘A good man—a bad king’. Macaulay affects not to see any compatibility between the two—but all the same, they are quite compatible. His illustrations are not effective; the cases are not parallel.
- l. 21.—*In spite of all his temperance at table, and all his regularity at chapel.* A sarcastic sneer by way of a parting shot.

## P. 58.

- l. 7.—The only point calling for notice here is in line 8: ‘The answer is short, clear, and decisive’. Macaulay’s answers are always of this nature—so much so, that the reader is taken aback by their simplicity and obviousness, and wonders why he never saw the explanation before, and whether there may not possibly be something deeper behind all. Compare line 15. This confident air of mock surprise at the nice apprehensions and misrepresentations of historians is very telling.
- l. 20.—How does this square with the statement two paragraphs above, that ‘the defenders of Charles are fond of dwelling on another topic’? This is certainly a change of front. But taken on its own merits this is a model paragraph. ‘The enemies of the Parliament,’ introduced at the head of the first sentence, preserve their place in each of those succeeding. Thereafter, we have a very typical specimen of Macaulay’s delight in marshalling a profusion of concrete details. Few writers are more successful in collecting a series of picturesque circumstances, to aid the reader’s comprehension of the subject. Not one of the

chief events of the great Rebellion but is here brought up vividly by a brief and energetic reference. No principle is perceptible in the order; indeed none was possible.

‘Macaulay can draw a most vivid portrait so far as that can be done by a picturesque accumulation of characteristic facts, but he never gets below the surface, or details the principles whose embodiment he describes from without.’ (Leslie Stephen, p. 292.)

P. 59.

7. 19.—Again Macaulay tries an elaborate metaphor, forcible enough in all conscience, and sufficiently apposite from his standpoint. He was fond of Biblical allusions and illustrations. In this case the figure is in questionable taste.

P. 60.

7. 1.—This is a convenient place to notice Macaulay’s vocabulary. It cannot be called classical, and still less is it Saxon; both elements seem to be present in pretty equal proportions—the preponderance, if any, being on the classical side. In this sentence the following are classical:—possible, people, intolerant, arbitrary, system, subvert, acts, cruelty, folly, objections, despotic, power, and removed. All the rest are Saxon; but it will be observed that, almost without exception, they are conjunctions, prepositions, pronouns, and auxiliary verbs—for which there is no classical equivalent. The only Saxon word used, that might have been in a classical form, is ‘brought up,’ having equivalents more or less apposite in ‘trained,’ ‘educated,’ &c. ‘Brought up’ suits the case best from its vagueness.

- l. 5.—So with the next sentence :—case, compelled, produces, pernicious, effects, intellectual, moral, character, and people,—are classical, and the only Saxon word of importance (excepting as usual the necessary Saxon elements in every sentence) is ‘acknowledge,’ which has classical equivalents in ‘admit,’ ‘concede,’ &c. From these two sentences we should set down Macaulay as a writer who leans to the classical rather than to the Saxon side of our vocabulary, and that is probably the correct view. At the same time there are passages where the Saxon element is studiously affected.
- ll. 9 and 10.—One of Macaulay’s curious proportions, which might be expressed in symbols thus :—  
 If A varies as B, and B varies as C, then A varies as C.  
 The violence of political outrages is proportional to popular ferocity and ignorance ; which are proportional to the oppression under which the people have lived ; therefore the outrages are proportional to the oppression.
- l. 16.—A hackneyed metaphor—which is changed at line 22, to another, perhaps as hackneyed.
- l. 22.—Mark the ever-recurring play of contrast in ‘ignorance—knowledge’ ; ‘blind fury—blind submission’. Note too the Parallelism in ‘if they—it was because,’ twice repeated.
- l. 27.—*The worst of them at first*—is in its appropriate place at the end.
- l. 28.—Also a very good sentence.
- l. 29.—Once more, the characteristic abruptness. We do not see what it imports until after several sentences. What Macaulay intends, is to give a simile by way of illustrating his point. From our experience of him, we do not expect him to use any phrase of reference explaining his purpose. The simile—a purely intellectual one, to aid the understanding—is both original and ingenious ; it is

elaborately worked up; and it is very suitable for the occasion, being in its nature more intelligible than the thing compared.

P. 61.

7. 16.—Our figure is changed—probably because the other, although suitable enough for hitting off the general situation, was not quite so relevant in this more limited aspect. Macaulay might have painted a picture of intoxicated soldiers in Spain, and their doings there, but that would not have had the same appositeness, which is the most likely cause of its abandonment.

The one simile supplements the weakness of the other. The difficulty of securing a single example that would apply in both aspects, is probably Macaulay's reason for using two. As they stand, the examples—except in the narrow points of their application—are opposed and conflicting. 'Freedom' of course is a desirable thing in itself, and according to Macaulay, though it produces bad effects at first, its influence finally, is all for good. But how of the intoxication of soldiers on the Rhine? Would it be feasible to argue that temperance being a desirable thing in itself, they do well to pass through the ordeal of repeated intoxications? This would be making too fine a point of it; so our author tries his hand at another. But that other is not above suspicion. He has represented a revolution as a sudden thing, and deplores its outrages; but a house half finished has reached that state gradually, and even though it may show disorder, its disorder is not of a kind to be deplored. The figures are all very well on a hurried view; they serve for a moment to clench the argument in a superficial way, but when examined for similarity in minute details they altogether break down. A much better comparison, and

one that would have suited both situations—would be to a conflagration—like the great Fire of London,—deplorable in itself, and entailing great misery, but the beginning of a better era,—wider streets, and better buildings,—a blessing in disguise.

- l. 25.—Yet another figure,—rather an *Allegory* or *Fable* than a simile, and worked up with all Macaulay's characteristic profusion and wealth of language. He is said to have kept up a series of such tales, for the purpose of pressing them into figurative use. In this case, the similarity is very striking, and Macaulay does not tell his fable and leave the reader to make out the interpretation, but himself gives the complete application. The doctrine, however, is a dangerous one; it enjoins us to receive and succour Liberty in her anarchical stage!

P. 62.

- l. 18.—This is a pointed *Epigram*,—a favourite figure with our author. It is somewhat on a footing with the epigram (not Macaulay's),—"Verbosity is cured by a wide vocabulary"—apparently a contradiction in terms, but really containing a very valuable truth.
- l. 20.—We have not yet exhausted our author's wealth of illustration. Still another,—of a more homely order than Ariosto's Fairy. Not that this is altogether apposite. The prisoner is supposed to be taken out of prison quietly. A more fitting situation would be where a prisoner has escaped and in his blindness makes an indiscriminate onslaught on friends and foes. For the liberty that Macaulay has been picturing, is not liberty granted by the oppressors, but liberty wrested from them violently by the oppressed.

We have had a plethora of illustration. The avowed object of an expositor in using such aids, is merely to



make himself thoroughly intelligible, to clear up an abstruse subject, and to save his reader's time in conceiving it. Whatever goes beyond this, is superfluity and waste. Macaulay is here too lavish in his similitudes. After his first example, we are in as good a position for comprehending him, as we are when we have mastered his fourth. Indeed, the danger is that the mind has been distracted by many different allusions, so that instead of gaining anything it has suffered loss. A poet would glory in surrounding his subject with such a profusion, but then the figures are pure embellishments, and the principles that regulate exposition and the rules that govern Poetic art are distinct. Macaulay has here merged his scientific tendencies in the artistic. Probably these pages were what he had in his eye when he confessed that this essay was 'overloaded with gaudy and ungraceful ornaments'.

- l. 26.—An energetic passage in which Macaulay uses his old device of curt sentences. Each follows the other like a succession of pistol shots. As usual, too, the play of Antithesis is unceasing—'contend—coalesce;' 'order—chaos'.

#### P. 63.

- l. 4.—An agreeable sparkle of wit which carries everything before it, and which it is difficult to answer at once. But an answer there is, and the politicians with their self-evident proposition are not so far from the mark as this would lead us to suppose. No better illustration of Macaulay's mode of argumentation could easily be found. The reader is hurried on, and has his judgment taken captive by some plausible illustration, till he finds himself inwardly consenting to everything, before he is aware to what lengths he has been committed. The secret of the author's method is to take a proposition in which there is

some force, and exaggerate it till it is palpably absurd. Every nation is not ready for freedom ; a certain amount of wisdom *is* requisite. This 'certain amount,' Macaulay elevates into all the highest wisdom and goodness one expects from any nation, and of course to wait for this from a nation in slavery means waiting for ever.

- l. 12.—*Therefore*. For several pages we have had a digression, —a discussion of Revolutions in the abstract, and now we return for the purpose of making the application to the case of Milton. The 'therefore' is thus a most significant word, containing as it does, the essence of the reasoning in the foregoing pages. The question is whether it is not too short for the occasion. Some phrase of greater length and calling more attention to the transition, would be more suitable. 'It is on such grounds as these.' 'It is in consequence of these reasonings,' &c. This would be a good opportunity for explicit reference by means of a summary or repetition in substance of what has preceded. 'Because, then, we think that liberty newly acquired is sure to be associated with much that is anarchical and objectionable, we decidedly approve,' &c. Some such phrase, embodying the gist of the argument, renders the bearing of the digression more clear.
- l. 20.—*Execution of the King*—the emphatic thing in the place of emphasis. Then—'of that proceeding,' is a demonstrative phrase of reference inverted for the sake of being closely tacked on to the important part of the sentence before.
- l. 22. A good periodic sentence—with all its parts well fitted in. The 'in justice,' phrase might come before 'we must say,' with the advantage of conjoining 'say' and the noun clause which is its object.
- l. 29.—After an elaborate and long sustained period, Macaulay's love of variety induces him to favour us with a succession

of brief and jerky sentences. Further on in p. 64, l. 18, he recurs to a long sustained period. Nothing is more noticeable in our author's style than his desire to avoid wearying the reader by monotony in the length of his sentences. The effects are studied ; variety is one of his first principles. Still, critics complain that his sentence structure is 'monotonous and mechanical' (Leslie Stephen), and the charge is not without foundation ; Macaulay in time exhausts his variety of forms and, thereafter, merely repeats himself.

P. 64.

- l. 1.—Interrogations as often before—partly for variety, partly as a definite call to attention.
- l. 5.—*The King can do no wrong.* Macaulay does not mean to commit himself to this dictum. He only quotes it as a rejoinder from his imaginary opponents, and introduces it with characteristic abruptness, trusting that the shock of surprise which it occasions, will make the reader alive to its real bearing. The same is true of the next sentence but one, l. 7. So too in l. 11. 'The person of a king is sacred.' He is quoting the old abstract maxims usually adduced in the interests of Charles I., and answering them by applying them each in turn to the case of James II.
- l. 18.—A remarkable period containing no involved clauses, but sustained by a series of adjective clauses attached to the subject. The main parts of the sentence are the first words and the last. 'Those who drove James from his throne, were his nephew and his two daughters.' All between 'throne' and 'were' is, so to speak, mere padding—facts all implied in the more general statement 'drove him from his throne'.

## P. 65

l. 2.—Another long suspended period not quite so well managed. The 'can' hangs loosely in the middle, so that we are apt to forget its connections. It would lighten the labour of the reader considerably—although it destroys something of the periodic character—to say 'how the same persons on the fifth of November can thank God,' &c., 'and on the thirtieth of January can contrive,' &c. The defect might be equally well remedied by curtailing the remarks about William, and thus diminishing the suspense between the subject and the predicate—the 'persons' and the 'can'. Try 'how the same persons who thank God for making His servant William our King and Governor, can' &c.

l. 8.—*Blood of the martyr.* An example of a common and hackneyed figure of contiguity—synecdoche—part for the whole, for 'the death of the royal martyr'.

This is a long paragraph—and although we began in full hopes of a justification of Milton's conduct, we have wandered back to a comparison between Charles and James. In view of that, it would be more satisfactory to leave out all mention of Milton on p. 63, until we are able fully to handle the subject on p. 66. All this is but clearing the way, and the main issue should not be complicated by intermixture with the preliminaries.

l. 11.—A sub-paragraph giving the necessary qualifications and explanations to a previous statement (p. 63, l. 21), which could not be qualified in its place. After taking up the clue, we have a studied periodic arrangement in three members, with the important point fitly brought in at the end—'injurious to the cause of freedom'.

Referring to Macaulay's argument and recalling his famous illustrations on the subject of liberty, we are con-

strained to admit, that he is not quite logical. According to the principle for which he has contended, the outrages that follow upon newly-acquired freedom are necessary; they are but the intoxications which by and by lead to temperance; but the dust and irregularity of an unfinished building. To look at these things only, is a mere sophism; the cure for them is freedom. If so, is not Macaulay inconsistent in deploring this event as injurious to the cause of freedom?

## P. 66.

- L.* 6.—At last we enter on the paragraph finally disposing of the subject towards which all this preliminary matter has been tending.
- L.* 13.—Periodic. There is something of paradox in this style of argumentation. It would have been more consistent for Macaulay to justify the assassination of Charles I. out and out, than to *finesse* in this doubtful way with his opponents.

## P. 67.

- L.* 5.—Another periodic sentence, with all its subordinate parts in their right places.
- L.* 11.—A transition clearly indicated,—still Milton's conduct, but in another aspect.
- W.* 16 and 18.—Mark the parallelism of both sentences ending in 'extraordinary'.
- L.* 18.—Here the nature of the question demands a departure from Milton, and an inquiry into the administration of Cromwell. The paragraph consequently ends with a full defence of the Protector. It illustrates Macaulay's habit of explaining one set of historical events by reference to other events. We have allusions to a 'Venetian oligarchy,' 'a Dutch stadtholder,' 'an American President,' 'Washington and Bolivar'.

- i. 6. —A good example of the summary—repeating in substance the contents of a whole paragraph—for the sake of Explicit Reference. The sentence is Periodic, and deviates somewhat from Macaulay's usual method. Instead of numerous 'though' clauses we should have expected each standing independently on its own feet, thus:—  
 'We believe that the intentions of Cromwell were at first honest. We believe that he was driven,' &c. The only probable explanation of the change is the fact, that the statements are mere repetitions and not intended as new matter. The principal fact to which they are subordinate is at the end of the sentence.
- L. 13.—*A good constitution is better than the best despot.* One of Macaulay's happy and energetic Epigrams.
- L. 18.—Equally happy and pointed.
- L. 26.—Once more—exaggeration. The present moment, and the uppermost topic for the time being, occupy too great a space in Macaulay's mind. The sentence is a good one for manipulating as regards Order of Words. Any changes that we make will only show how good the present order is:—'Religious liberty and freedom of discussion had never before been enjoyed in a greater degree'. 'Religious liberty and freedom of discussion had been enjoyed in a greater degree never before.' 'Before, religious liberty and freedom of discussion, had never been enjoyed in a greater degree.' 'Never before in a greater degree had the people enjoyed religious liberty and freedom of discussion.' 'Never before had there been a greater amount of religious liberty, and freedom of discussion.' To take the 'never' from the beginning of the sentence not only destroys the emphasis in this sentence, but spoils the parallelism with the next.

- l. 28.—Characteristic Balance and Contrast. So in p. 70, l. 6, 'practice—theory,' and in ll. 11, 12, 'ancient prejudices—personal qualities'.

## P. 70.

- l. 17.—It is not worth while to look minutely into this page, for there is nothing of importance until we come to l. 17. From that point we have a forcible series of short, balanced, and contrasted sentences in our author's most characteristic vein.
- l. 28.—A most eloquent and lofty paragraph. The 'blush' is peculiarly Macaulayan. 'Servitude without loyalty—sensuality without love,' besides being antithetic is epigrammatic. The sentence is crowded with contrasts—'dwarfish talents—gigantic vices,' 'cold hearts—narrow minds,' 'paradise—golden age'. So too in every sentence of the paragraph, particularly p. 71, ll. 7, 8, and 10.

## P. 71.

- l. 7.—*Pocketed her insults and her gold*,—is a case of Condensed Sentence,—a combination of the figurative and the literal.
- l. 20.—Biblical phraseology is once more drawn upon to supplement Macaulay's own wealth of diction.
- The contrasts throughout are mostly secondary,—the only case of primary or direct antithesis being 'dwarfish—gigantic'
- l. 22.—Contrary to his usual habit, our author is here wonderfully condescending in the matter of Explicit Reference. He explains his plans, in a direct and straightforward way, quite unusual for him.

## P. 72.

- l. 9.—An elaborate *Simile*, addressed to the Intellect, very pat and opportune. Nothing whatever can be advanced

against its fitness ; the relevance is complete. It is worked up with all Macaulay's profusion, and in the application the circumstances are well selected. For example, mark the bold contrast in 'kissed the hand of the king in 1640, and spat in his face in 1649'. Also in 'Cromwell, inaugurated in Westminster, and hanged at Tyburn'.

- l. 26.—*Parties*—*partis-ans*, is a half pun, quite in keeping with the pointed style.
- l. 28.—A definite announcement that the Puritans are to come first under review. As usual, Macaulay indulges in a strong assertion—'the most remarkable body of men which the world has ever produced'. A 'perhaps' is not an adequate qualification for a statement so sweeping. 'Which,' as being restrictive, should give place to 'that'—or the relative might be omitted altogether

#### P. 73.

- l. 1.—This keeps up the Parallel Construction.
- l. 2.—*He that runs, &c.*, deviates from the main theme, and should be tacked on to the previous sentence by a semicolon, as being subordinate.
- l. 4.—Resumes the main theme, and now we see the advantage of merging the intermediate sentence.
- l. 6.—Once more the leading topic is put in the foreground, and is maintained so throughout.
- l. 13.—*Tender mercies*,—ironical. The very reverse is meant.
- l. 14.—Macaulay is now in his element, and he treats us to a fine collection of objective and concrete circumstances,—one of his favourite devices. No order is apparent in the distribution of the items ; they seem to be heaped together solely on the principle that those burdened with most qualifications shall go to the end.

Turning back to the opening of the paragraph, we find that really what is discussed here is, not the Puritans



generally, but the odious, ridiculous parts of their character. A suggestion might be made in consequence, to cut off the opening sentence, 'We would speak first of the Puritans,' and make it a paragraph-sentence by itself—isolated from the rest of the Exposition, and covering not *one* paragraph but *six*—down to middle of p. 80, when the Royalists have their innings.

- /. 26.—A paragraph correcting the exaggerated impression of the preceding.

The first sentence is an elaborate period—the suspension being effected by retaining the predicate until the qualifying adjective clauses attached to the subject are exhausted. The suspension is artificial and over-strained. Still the subsidiary place for these facts is the right one, and any attempt to give them a principal place,—which would not be surprising in Macaulay—would have to be condemned. The strain might be reduced, if it is thought desirable, thus:—'Yet they were no vulgar fanatics those men, who roused the people to resistance,—who directed, &c.,' or 'Yet it would be absurd to decry as vulgar fanatics those men who, &c.'

Again we have to remark on Macaulay's art in selecting the most striking particulars.

#### P. 74.

- /. 13.—Once again an impressive illustration—this time from Shakespeare—not a common source for Macaulay's allusions. The Simile is ingenious and original, and for the most part 'intellectual,' and appropriate.
- /. 18.—This third paragraph on the Puritans, is the one that really comes to the essential qualities of their character. The two before have cleared the way, and brushed aside accidental topics; now we are at the heart of the matter. Macaulay seems to pull himself together for a great effort,

and in consequence we find his characteristic mannerisms strongly marked throughout.

The first sentence is good. 'Superior beings,—eternal interests'—besides being balanced, has rightly the place of emphasis. A few tentative alterations might be suggested. 'It was from the daily contemplation of superior beings and eternal interests that the Puritans derived their peculiar character.' 'The peculiar character of the Puritans was due to their daily Contemplation,' &c. 'The peculiarities of the Puritan character were due to,' &c. This last is the most satisfactory variation in so far as it brings out prominently what is the theme of the Paragraph—the explanation of the peculiarities in this character.

1. 22.—Parallel Construction noticeable in 'they'. Balance and Contrast at the end—a direct antithesis in 'vast, —minute'.

### P. 75.

1. 2.—A curious sentence. Although we have three subjects, 'To know Him, to serve Him, to enjoy Him,' all presumably cumulative, yet the verb is singular—'was'. The explanation is that the Puritans had but one end, made up of knowledge, service, and enjoyment, in combination. Indeed the real subject of the verb is 'end,' and it would be more satisfactory for other reasons (notably for maintaining the Parallel Construction), to alter thus:—'With them the great end of existence was to know Him, to serve Him, to enjoy Him'.

1. 3.—*Ceremonious homage—pure worship.* Antithetic Balance.  
 1. 6.—Contrast throughout the sentence.  
 1. 9.—Inversion of Predicate and Subject for emphasis, as well as close connection.  
 1. 10.—To maintain a parallel construction, otherwise so well

marked, let us say—‘To them the difference between the greatest and “the” meanest of mankind seemed as nothing when they compared it with,’ &c. Or, if the ‘to them,’ seems artificial, say ‘They thought the difference between the greatest and “the” meanest of mankind, was as nothing when compared,’ &c.

l. 17.—Here begins a series of sentences modelled after the same plan, and all containing pointed Balances and strong Antithesis. ‘Works of philosophers—oracles of God.’ ‘Registers of heralds—Book of Life.’ ‘Splendid train of menials—legions of ministering angels.’ These three sentences also show a peculiar use of the Conjunction ‘if’—not in its habitual sense of condition, but equal to ‘granting that’ or ‘although’.

l. 24.—*Had charge over them*—is a weak ending, inferior to the emphatic close of the two sentences before. Say—‘they were watched over by legions of ministering angels’.

—*Their palaces*—Macaulay might have still kept up his ‘if’ form. ‘If they had no palaces on earth, they had houses (in Heaven) not made with hands; if they had no earthly diadems, they had crowns of glory which should never fade away.’

l. 26.—A very artificial, but energetic sentence. Mark *first*, the inversion of the prepositional phrases, and *secondly*, that the order of rich, eloquent, nobles, priests, given in the first member, is maintained in the second. Once more the Balance is perfect—down to the very adjectives and prepositions.

#### P. 76.

l. 3.—Macaulay is here rising to a pitch of eloquence that is almost sublime. His chief art, as always before, is bold contrast,—‘light—darkness’; ‘Heaven—earth’; ‘created—passed away’.

- l. 11.—Ordained on his account*—is not exactly as it should be. The following sentences begin with 'For his sake'. It would be well to complete the parallelism by beginning here with 'on his account'. 'Ordained' is weak. Try—'On his account, events which short-sighted politicians ascribed to earthly causes, had been ordained by divine decree'. It as well to have the Balance perfect, if we are to have it at all.
- l. 13.*—It is almost unnecessary to point to the incessant scintillations of Contrast and Balance in these sentences. 'The pen of the Evangelist—the harp of the prophet'; 'no common deliverer—no common foe'; 'the sweat of no vulgar agony—the blood of no earthly sacrifice'. In these two last we have, in addition to Balanced clauses, within each separate sentence, a complete resemblance in form between two successive sentences. All this is eminently artificial, and could be attained only after painstaking labour on the part of the author. Without a doubt it is overdone, and somewhat tiresome. An occasional flash of the kind is exhilarating enough; but a continuous discharge of brilliant fireworks destroys its own effect.
- l. 18.*—A series of similar Balances, arranged in a Climax as a fitting close to the paragraph. As to the order of the climactic items, there is no doubt that the last is in its natural place—but the same can hardly be said of the others. 'The rocks had been rent,' is clearly the item of lowest significance. It therefore should stand first. Of the other two it is hard to say which is the greater. But the transition from 'sun' to 'all nature' would be easier than from 'the dead' to 'all nature'. Let us, therefore, arrange, (1) rocks (2) the dead (3) the sun (4) all nature.
- This is altogether a paragraph above the ordinary level. Although beyond the average length, it keeps by the subject indicated in the opening sentence. It main-

tains the Parallel construction in an exemplary way from first to last, and although 'the Puritans' generally, and 'they,' and 'their,' are changed in the end to 'the meanest of them,' and 'he,' and 'his,' all this is only by way of striking the reader with a more pointed individuality. Throughout we have continuous flashes of Antithesis, some of them more elaborate and systematic than any we have yet had in the essay. Moreover, we have several marked cases of inversion all in harmony with the high-strung and emphatic character of the paragraph.

- l.* 21.—A new paragraph, touching on the same theme, from a slightly different point of view—the mixture of contrasting elements in the Puritan mind.
- l.* 22.—We have *four* elements in each set, but there is no correspondence between them. 'Self-abasement' and 'proud' are a couple; so too with 'passion' and 'calm,' which last might therefore be brought to the end; but the others have no relation. Why are they abstract nouns in the one case, and adjectives in the other?
- l.* 25.—Back to the artificial and antithetic Balances of the last paragraph. This is the 'self-abasement' and 'the pride'.
- l.* 27.—The 'passion,'—which continues down to *l.* 6 of next page. Climactic order would read:—tears, groans, convulsions.
- l.* 29.—'Lyres' should have an epithet corresponding to 'tempting'. The difficulty of getting a suitable one is probably the explanation of the omission.

#### P. 77.

- l.* 6.—The 'but,' suggests the change from 'passion to 'calmness'. Mark that while the 'self-abasement' and the 'pride,' were illustrated in a sentence between them, we

have already had six sentences on the 'passion,' but there are not six corresponding on the 'calmness,' or 'inflexibility'. In fact from this point there is an undercurrent of Balance, which Macaulay seems to have felt some difficulty in moulding into artificial shape; and in consequence to a certain extent it runs riot, uncontrolled.

- l. 9.—An abrupt change of subject, from 'he' to 'people'—as also a change from 'the Puritan' to 'the godly'—from 'he' to 'they'. In the last paragraph the author began with the plural and worked himself into the singular; here he has reversed the process and unwinds himself again from singular to plural. The necessity is not very clear. To preserve the parallel Construction, say 'These godly men, might well be laughed at by people who saw nothing of them but,' &c.
- l. 12.—Still away from the Parallelism. Say, 'But when encountered in the hall of debate or in the field of battle, they were no laughing matter'—'no subject for laughter'.
- l. 15.—*Coolness of judgment, immutability of purpose.* This is the 'calm, inflexible, and sagacious' (of line 24 of previous page) in varied language.
- l. 19.—An Epigram in Macaulay's pointed and paradoxical way—and this strain dominates the rest of the paragraph.
- It is useless to collect the numerous Antitheses which occur with painful frequency in these sentences.

### P. 78.

- l. 9.—Another allusion—not very happy. Talus is an unfamiliar name to the general reader, and to refer to him in this way only darkens the subject instead of clearing it up. Much better to omit the reference.

This paragraph is also a formidable affair, but it is not so successfully handled as the preceding. It accumulates a wealth of diction round the Puritan character, in

Macaulay's exaggerated and heightened style, but there is nothing striking in the *order* of the exposition. His ideas are made perfectly clear, chiefly by Contrast; the sentences are as before highly artificial, but they are not so markedly laboured as was then noticeable.

- l. 15.—Summarising for the sake of the reader—after such a prolonged array of details. The paragraph is mostly made up of repetition.

P. 79.

- l. 1.—*Dunstons, &c.* This is an example of Antonomasia, Individual for the species, a form of Synecdoche—a figure of Similarity. In this case it does not appear that the individuals selected are particularly apposite. Much better examples occur in the next paragraph—‘doubting Thomases, or careless Gallios’. Besides being more familiar, these two cases are more appropriate to the circumstances.

- l. 6.—This opening sentence requires some consideration. Is the paragraph to take up this subject of the identification of ‘liberty’ and ‘religion’? As we read on we see that it does not, and that its purpose is to describe another class of men different from the Puritans, but allied with them. With this knowledge, we should amend the opening sentence, by throwing it into a subordinate place, thus:—‘If the Puritans espoused,’ &c.

The whole subject is so unimportant that it is rightly dismissed in a few sentences.

P. 80.

- l. 14.—*We now come to the Royalists*—a clear and unmistakable transition. The succeeding sentences, down to line 4 of next page, are all of an explanatory kind prefacing the real discussion. Macaulay is always profuse in his decla-

rations about his own candour and fairness to opponents ; he affects to give them every advantage.

## P. 81.

- l. 7.—It may be questioned whether ‘the honest old cavaliers’ deserves the place of chief emphasis. The ‘with complacency,’ as indicating the favourable view Macaulay is inclined to take, should receive the place of honour.
- l. 8.—Macaulay’s ‘comparative’ spirit still active.
- l. 12.—Exposition by negatives. He first tells us what they were *not* ; afterwards what they *were*. The selection of concrete circumstances is apt, and effective.
- l. 14.—A series of epigrammatic clauses, very Macaulayan, balanced and antithetic. ‘Uniforms’—is a Figure of Contiguity—Synecdoche—part for whole.
- l. 17.—The positive side of the exposition, showing the same figurative arts. Our author revels in paradoxical statements which combine two opposite and almost incompatible ideas.—‘A freedom in subserviency,’ ‘a nobleness in degradation,’ ‘prejudices of childhood, and the venerable names of history,’ all show this quality.
- l. 23.—‘Duessa’—we had an allusion before to one of the personages in the Faërie Queene, but this is less objectionable in so far as Duessa, and the Red Cross Knight are the most familiar of Spenser’s characters. The *Simile*—for it is not a mere Comparison—is original and appropriate, and has a mixed effect ; it both presents the thought more vividly to the Intellect, and operates to some extent on the Feelings. The contrast between ‘beauty’ and ‘sorceress’ is well brought in for the maximum of emphasis.

## P. 82.

- l. 15.—We have had only one paragraph on the Royalists—answering to several regarding the Puritans, and we find



that it is not nearly so *piquant* in its description as the others. The explanation is, that there are not so many materials for an effective display of their characteristics. Macaulay would have done wrong to make his Balances on this larger scale—of paragraphs answering to paragraphs—too uniform; he must expand the one or contract the other to ensure an equality which does not exist, and in that way would have run the risk of spoiling both. As it is, he has taken the more sensible course of allowing to each subject an expansion commensurate with the materials.

l. 18.—Back to the application of all this to Milton, and that for the last time. Many digressions and many explanatory circumstances have led us away from the central object of the Essay, but now at last we are safe from any further digression, and can settle down to round off Milton's conduct undisturbed.

l. 19.—*He was not a Puritan, He was not a free-thinker, He was not a Cavalier.* These are the three classes our author has enumerated, and this mode of introducing the negatives first, and denying to Milton an adhesion to any of the three, is characteristic of Macaulay. It is surprising and abrupt; we ask inwardly—To what party then could he belong? and, as if just anticipating this, Macaulay answers in line 21, 'The noblest qualities,' &c. But all this is exaggerated and untenable. The grain of truth that is in it, is exaggerated till it becomes almost false. This panegyric style of eulogy, which demands for the hero of the moment qualities that are supernatural and ideal, and never found in real life, is characteristic of our author. 'Macaulay likes to represent a man as a bundle of contradictions, because it enables him to obtain startling contrasts. He heightens a vice in one place, a virtue in another, and piles them

together in a heap, without troubling himself to ask whether nature can make such monsters, or preserve them if made.' (Leslie Stephen, p. 309). Boswell was 'the greatest of fools,' and 'the best of biographers'.

- l. 23.—This sentence is made up of a number of suggestive allusions, which amount to Figures of Contiguity—Metonymies. 'Court,' 'conventicle,' 'cloister,' 'christmas revel,' &c., are merely concrete and palpable symbols for—Royalty, and Puritanism.

### P. 83.

- l. 2.—A vague metaphor not in very good keeping, and not very intelligible. Some chemical operation is probably what he is thinking of, but it is not made apparent.
- l. 3.—After a sentence or two of a general kind, we now get something more specific. Details are given of Milton's resemblance to each of the three classes in turn. 'Milton was not a Puritan' but he had great affinities to the Puritans.
- l. 7.—This continues till l. 16.  
There is hardly any need for a new sentence. The one is a mere iteration of the other, and a semicolon break would suffice.
- l. 12.—The negative side of the Puritans, but the positive of the free-thinkers. 'He was not a free-thinker,' but he resembled them, in so far as he was free from the contagion of the frantic delusions of the Puritans, &c. The reference to 'coolest sceptic,' and 'most profane scoffer,' is the only hint we have in detail, regarding Milton's affinity to Macaulay's second class, the free-thinkers; it acts as a kind of link between the first and the third—the Puritans and the Cavaliers.
- l. 16.—The transition to the Cavaliers—'the party of the tyrant,' is stealthy and not sufficiently pronounced. He

might have said simply Cavaliers, but that he wished to balance 'tyrant' with 'tyranny'. A more explicit mode of expression would be:—'Though not a Cavalier, he had, nevertheless, all the estimable and ornamental qualities monopolised by the Cavaliers.'

- l. 19.—*There was none who*; say rather, 'None had a stronger sense,' &c. It is hardly necessary at this late stage to call attention to the Balanced phrases.
- l. 22.—One other example of Macaulay's love of paradoxical statements.

### P. 84.

- l. 2.—As usual, after a piece of complicated exposition, Macaulay proceeds to clench his meaning by illustrations, of which, before the paragraph ends, we have *three*, 'Like Ulysses he enjoyed all the pleasures of fascination; but he was not fascinated.' 'Like Ulysses he tasted the cup of Circe; but he bore about with him a sure antidote.' Both these episodes in the life of Ulysses have been used times without number for figurative purposes. The Syrens in particular are now commonplace; but Macaulay's application is novel and appropriate. While chiefly aiding the understanding, the similes have, at the same time, an elevating effect on the feelings. There is something epigrammatic in l. 3 'Enjoyed the pleasures of fascination, but was not fascinated.' The effect of the 'yet,' and the 'but' in the next sentences is somewhat similar.

'Tasted the *cup* of Circe,' is Contiguity,—Metonymy. Container for thing contained.

- l. 9.—Still iterating the same leading idea. Mark the contrast in *statesman and poet*—so well managed that 'statesman' opens, and 'poet' closes the sentence. The words are figurative,—concrete for abstract—a figure of Similarity.

## P. 85.

- l. 6.—Once more a simile. This time not Homeric, but Shakespearian, and more elevating, as well as more original and striking. Much of its force lies in its mode of introduction. There is no prosaic phrase explaining the similarity. All is abrupt, terse, and telling.
- l. 12.—*Mentioned* usurps the place of importance. Better to say—‘It still remains to mention that from which the public character of Milton derives its great and peculiar splendour.’

We are on the alert to discover this new aspect of Milton’s conduct, but it is like Macaulay not to tell us at once. He beats about the bush for a little, and although we have a hint in l. 17—‘the freedom of the human mind,’ it is not till p. 86, l. 11 (‘the liberty of the Press and the unfettered exercise of private judgment’), that we are in full possession of this great and peculiar splendour. Most writers would have made a point of giving this prominently at the very outset of the paragraph; and might have begun something in this way:—‘But the great and peculiar splendour of Milton’s public character was the stand he made for the liberty of the Press, and the unfettered exercise of private judgment.’

Our author goes on to indicate that Milton’s credit is all the greater that in this battle he stood alone; but the sentences are not very compactly put together. There is in fact considerable dislocation. The sentence (l. 14) beginning, ‘But the glory of the battle,’ &c., should be carried on to l. 20, and inserted after Star-Chamber; or, and perhaps this is the preferable arrangement, it should be tacked on to the one before it, ‘in conjunction with others,’ by means of a semicolon. So, on the same grounds, the full stop in l. 20 also should be a semicolon. The reason for this is obvious. ‘If he exerted himself to

overthrow a forsworn king and a persecuting hierarchy, he exerted himself in conjunction with others,' is away from the main subject, and while proper enough by way of contrast, it is nothing if not subordinate.

## P. 86.

- l. 1.—'Liberty of *the Press*'—a very common metonymy, the Instrument for the Agent. So we speak of the pen, the sword, and the pulpit.
- l. 6.—*Dominion of prejudice as well as from that of Charles*—a Condensed sentence—a conjunction of the figurative and the literal—the same verb doing for both.
- l. 7.—A well-managed period. The only flaw is the double use of the relative 'who,'—which is twice hung up away from its predicate. But perhaps there is an intentional parallelism.

Macaulay shows great aptness in bending to figurative purposes circumstances that come under his notice in the regular course of his subject. We had one good example already in his criticism of Comus, p. 26, l. 5; and now we have another from the same source. The simile is most apposite and original; and is all the more forcible that it is so near to his hand. To have introduced it in any other connection, would have made it look far-fetched, but as we are dealing with Milton and have already had the Comus under review, it comes in naturally, without the appearance of straining.

- l. 22.—Here we have an interesting example of Concord. The predicate is *singular* ('was'), but the subject is treble—'to reverse the rod, to spell the charm backward, to break the ties,' &c., from which we should argue that the *plural* is the right number. But the singular may be justified in two ways, either by saying that the real subject is 'aim,' which looks like the complement of the predicate, or by saying that although three specific facts

are mentioned, they are only items in a compound process. It is a question whether anything would be lost by inverting it, thus—‘The noble aim of Milton was to reverse the rod,’ &c. The emphasis remains as strong; and one advantage is, that by the inversion (‘To this’) of the next sentence the connection is more close.

The same inversion is kept up in the next sentence, chiefly for emphasis, but partly also for close connection.

### P. 87.

ll. 4 and 5.—Two metaphors, neither of them very striking.

Beyond a few balanced phrases in the last sentences, the paragraph does not illustrate much. We may note however, that it is a good example of parallel construction. The topic started is ‘Milton’s aim,’ and this is kept at the head of each sentence throughout.

- l. 14.—A new paragraph owing to a change of subject. The emphatic word is ‘boldest,’ which is fairly well placed, but which would receive more prominence if we said—‘literary services of the boldest kind,’ or, ‘the literary services he selected for himself were always of the boldest’.
- l. 16.—A metaphor—purely intellectual, and kept up in the next sentence. A case like this shows very well the advantages of the metaphor over the simile. It is more brief, and further, does not interfere with the structure of the sentence. To turn it into a simile would necessitate a roundabout movement—longer in itself, and disturbing the continuity of the paragraph. For example: ‘Just as in a siege some men press into the forlorn hope, while others wait till the outworks have been carried and the breach entered, and then come up in the rear, so it was with Milton and the other writers of his day’.

### P. 88.

- l. 1.—A change of metaphor—not in so good keeping. The

figure is taken from the exploration of a mine. Truth has often been compared to a torch ('Truth like a torch, the more it's shook, it shines,'), shining in darkness, but the idea of exploring by means of it a mine infected by noxious gases is new, though not very appropriate. A mine has to be excavated before it can be explored—so that there can be no dark and infected recesses in which a light has never shone. Like some others of Macaulay's figures, this does very well on a superficial survey, but when more closely examined, it breaks down. He should have been content with his original metaphor from a siege; it is far more appropriate, and by retaining it, we do not run the risk of distracting the mind. Probably Macaulay thought the change justifiable on the ground of adding to the impressiveness. But the advantages are over-balanced by the disadvantages.

'There is no more hazardous enterprise.' Up to this point Parallel Construction has been maintained; a slight change is all that is necessary to keep it up throughout. Say—'Milton undertook the hazardous enterprise of bearing the torch of truth into those dark and infected recesses in which no light had ever shone. It was his choice and his pleasure to penetrate,' &c.

- l 6.—Again a deviation from Parallel Construction, but after this, it is all right till the end of the paragraph. Say rather:—'His hardihood in maintaining his opinions, deserves the respect even of his opponents.'
- l 12.—A temporary relapse to Macaulay's favourite mannerism of a succession of curt and jerky sentences.
- l 19.—At last we have done with Milton's public conduct, and we are carried off on a new line of remark—back to the literary aspect, and this time Milton's prose. It is but what we expect, when we find that the transition is not clearly made. There is no note of warning that we have

done with the political question, and there is as little indication what the new subject is to be. Anybody but Macaulay would have said :—‘ At last we have exhausted what we have to say of Milton’s conduct, and but one point remains—his prose writings. In regard to these, it is to be regretted that they should be so little read.’ This note, once struck, rules the paragraph ; the qualities of Milton’s prose being the theme throughout.

P. 89.

- l. 2.—Again Macaulayan exaggeration. Were he speaking of Burke he would probably make as strong a statement from the other side.
- l. 3.—Strong and impressive metaphor.
- l. 4.—The same metaphor kept up. Had Macaulay been very anxious to find a reason for the general neglect of Milton’s prose works, he might have found it here. It is probably because they are stiff with gorgeous embroidery that they do not command the attention of those who look for a more useful article.
- ll. 12 and 21.—give us several examples of what is called the editorial ‘we’—a device for softening the apparent egotism of ‘I’.

The essay is ended,—all that follows is a mere poetic flourish to leave the reader with a good impression, like the peroration of a speech. To round off the discourse artistically, he reverts to the incident which has been the occasion of the essay, and which was explained at the outset—‘ the publication of this relic of Milton’. This done, he lets his imagination run riot in what is almost an example of the figure called *Vision*, recalling Milton’s appearance and circumstances, in a very pictorial way. About this there is nothing to remark, except, as before, to enforce the concreteness, and imaginative character,



not only of Macaulay's writings, but of his mind. History and Biography to him are more poetic than scientific, and no better example than the present can be found. Note—'his small lodging, the old organ, the folded green hangings, the quick twinkle of his eyes, his noble countenance,' &c. In these the liberal use of adjectives is a prominent feature. Every noun has its epithet. Like most poetic effusions, this tampers somewhat with the facts,—Milton's daughters were not so eager to read, or to write for their father, as Macaulay's sentimental outburst would lead us to believe. Several touches in the picture approach the maudlin (notably that of kissing his hand and weeping on it), and are to be accounted for on the ground of Macaulay's youth at the time.

P. 90.

- L. 6.—There is a climactic arrangement in the particulars.—  
 (1) the lodging—vague and general (2) his position in the room—more particular (3) his eyes (4) the lines of his countenance as a whole (5) his speech and the listener's silence (6) consolation administered (7) reading to him, and writing down his composition. In all this there is a gradual widening and extending of the view, such as would naturally take place in a real visit ; and the order is all that can be desired.

P. 91

- L. 1.—Macaulay begins to think that perhaps his imaginative flights require apology, and consequently he assumes an apologetic tone.
- L. 9.—A good example of his profusion in synonymous phrases, —some of which, as often before, are biblical. There is a regular congeries of metaphors, all of them hackneyed and commonplace except the last.

The frequent repetition of the relative 'which' (five times) is not very elegant. To vary the construction would not, of course, suit Macaulay's purpose, and even the substitution of 'that,' the true restrictive relative would not be much of a gain.

- l. 16.—Inversions for emphasis. 'We trust that we know,' &c., is clumsy. Say—'These great men we know how to prize,' &c. Here the object is thrown into the foreground; and in the next member the subject kept till last.
- l. 18.—'To us,' is weakening at the end. Either leave it out altogether or place it before 'refreshing'. The sentence lends itself easily to manipulation for emphasis. Try,—  
'To us the sign of his books, the sound of his name, are refreshing.' This is objectionable as making 'to us' too prominent. 'Refreshing to us are the sight of his books and the sound of his name,' would be a very energetic inversion were that in demand; as it is, it is perhaps too strong for the occasion.
- l. 19.—Another of those literary similes which Macaulay's wide acquaintance with literature, and his retentive memory, made frequent in his writings. Not that it is so successful as many. As if anticipating the reader's unfamiliarity with the allusion, he takes care to give the essential point of likeness, but when all is done the effect is doubtful.

## P. 92.

- l. 1.—A lofty period—a fitting close to the essay. The hinges of the Periodic Structure are worth noticing:—*the man who; either—or; without aspiring; not—but*. Grammatically we may stop with sense at 'public good,' but the nature of the break leads us to expect more, and every new addition prepares us for an 'and,' before the last.

As above at l. 9. so here, we are struck with the awk-

wardness of 'with which,' so often repeated. Here it is easier to suggest an improvement, although an alteration will naturally somewhat disturb the parallelism that is always in Macaulay's thoughts. Try 'his zeal for the public good, his fortitude under every private calamity, his lofty disdain of temptations and dangers, his deadly hatred towards bigots and tyrants'.











